

This issue of **Southern Exposure** marks the beginning of our second year of existence, a fact that may come as a surprise to even our most enthusiastic supporters. The odds against a new magazine's survival are always high; when you consider that we are a "regional" magazine with a supposedly limited audience, the odds become almost prohibitive. Yet we have survived, and we look forward to this year as a further opportunity to provide needed insights and analysis into southern culture, politics, and economics. We think you'll agree that the wealth of material and the need for enjoyable reading and fresh perspectives can easily keep the journal going for some time.

If we are to be successful in this endeavor, however, we'll need extensive feedback from you. Our readers are active in every phase and at every level of southern life—nobody knows more about the South than you. We appreciate all letters, whether they contain criticism, suggestions, or just information on relevant subjects. We especially are delighted by the number of articles submitted by our readers who are students of the South, activists, or free-lance writers.

Finally, those of you whose subscriptions are expiring might want to take this chance to use the enclosed form to re-subscribe. The rest of you could use this same form to start subscribing and even send a gift subscription to a friend.

If last year is anything to go on, this year will pose dramatic new challenges—and opportunities. And examining in depth how the southern region is involved in the problems and solutions of complicated institutions or just simple living is what **Southern Exposure** is all about. That's why we regularly feature articles like the ones in this issue on government policy against Florida's poor, the power of planning in Appalachia, and organizing for change in Arkansas. Special issues on black politics, land, labor, and women are on the drawing boards, and the previous issues on military

spending, energy, and struggles of the 1930's are still available to the collector.

In this issue we made an initial attempt to gather a number of articles on one aspect of southern culture—music.

It is an unhappy fact that most of the South's cultural attributes have either been ignored as regional oddities (our speech patterns) or diluted beyond recognition by the rapidly changing currents of American life (our food is a prime example).

Those facets of American life that are generally conceded to be purely Southern are often nothing to be proud of. Witness the late, unlamented GOP Southern Strategy.

Of course, we may be proud of our literature and its undeniably strong impact on American writing and readers. Still, Faulkner and Welty are giants competing with other giants in a crowded arena. The ethnic and philosophical traits of a hundred schools of thought reduce Southern writers to being one trend out of many—popular one season, ignored the next.

But finally, we remember our music, our great redeemer. Our black music that has given birth to blues, spirituals, jazz, and soul blends its vitality with the haunting beauty of Anglo-Scottish hill music: the progenitor of bluegrass, country and western, "folk," and white church music. Today we even see that the curious hybrid, rock and roll, is undeniably Southern.

Aside from German classical music and transported Middle European folk music, both with essentially limited audiences, it may perhaps be argued that American music is Southern music. If this is so, then the South has no reason to feel inferior. For with any luck, after American economic and military world domination have vanished, our music will still be heard around the planet.

Southern Exposure

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Editor

Bob Hall

Editorial Staff

Steve Cummings
Bill Finger
Cary Fowler
Jacquelyn Hall
Sue Thrasher
Jim Tramel
Leah Wise

Lay-Out

Stephanie Coffin

Cover Design

David Jenkins

Special Thanks to:

Landen Gailey, Roger Friedman, Adelia Hall, Dick Hall, Katharine Heald, David Massey, Margie Ross, David Schlissel, and Mary Soka.

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music special...

- 2 "Country Music: Spring, 1974"
by Howard Romaine
- 3 Country Music: Hillbilly to Hank Wilson
by Sue Thrasher
- 23 Southern Rock 'N Roll
by Steve Cummings
- 27 The Limits of a Folk Hero
by Bill Finger
- 38 Lady Street Singer
by Bernice Reagon
- 42 The Factory Girl Song
by Frances Tamburro
- 52 Brookside Mine—1974
- 56 Piedmont Country Blues
by Bill Phillips
- 63 Talking Banjo
by Cecelia Conway and Tommy Thompson

...and more

- 67 Texas Purges Nobel Prize Winner
by Ronnie Dugger
- 71 Organizing Arkansas
by Wade Rathke
- 76 The Acid in Florida's Citrus
by D. Marshall Barry and Sr. Ann Kinnirey
- 84 Revolt Against Appalachia's Planners
by David Whisnant
- 103 Thoughts on Tyranny
by Stoney Cooks
- 105 Book Reviews
- 112 Resources



photo by Carter Tomassi

Leon Russell, rock star gone country, who records under the country name of Hank Wilson

"Country Music: Spring, 1974"

by Howard Romaine

The pope spreads his arms

So also Hank Snow Jr.

Everybody can come.

Charlie Pride/Doug Kershaw

George & Tammy & Loretta & Conway

Even Rusty

Who didn't Make It

Because of The Wine,

and Jerry Lee,

who kept on makin' it, in spite of

The Wine

or because.

But what about Hailie Selassie?

or Solzenitsyn

or Moshe Dayan.

They haven't heard Jimmy Snow preach

They can't hear the Pope,

And who listens to Golda, a woman

Does she think she's Yahweh?

And what about Allah?

Who's standing' up for Him in Nashville?

They're OK.

Fats goin' back to New Orleans for 'em

Big Mama doin' Houn Dog

with Elvis

playin' the piano

in the back.

Snortin' Coke

in his Blue Suede Shoes

Before the Alter

In the Pentecostal

Church of your Choice.

Memphis.

Is it the Pope or is it Martin?

Behind the Altar in the Pentecostal Memphis Church.

Or is it Bob Dylan.

Or Jesus

Raised from the dead?

Or George Wallace

Behind a Red, White and Blue Altar

In his Wheelchair

Hurting, In his Loins.

COUNTRY MUSIC--

FROM HILLBILLY TO HANK WILSON

by Sue Thrasher

**Our freckled faces sparkled then like diamonds in
the rough
With smiles that smelled of snaggle teeth and good
ole garrett snuff
If I could I would be trading all the fatback for the
lean
When Jesus was our Savior, and cotton was our
king.**

(Billy Joe Shaver, Return Music Inc.)

I grew up listening to Minnie Pearl's "Howdy" and knew in my mind what her hat with its dangling price tag looked like long before I saw her in person. Back then she had a bantering sidekick named Rod Brasfield who came from Hohenwald, Tennessee, and talked about the "Snip, Snap and Bite Cafe." We used to pass through Hohenwald on the way to the big city of Nashville, and I'd always crane my neck to see the inconspicuous store-front cafe that I considered a major landmark. Down the road apiece off to the left there was a sign pointing the way to Grinder's Switch, Minnie's home crossroads. I always found these tangible evidences of Rod and Minnie's life reassuring, and they reinforced my assumption that the Opry was one of those things in life you take for granted.

Those were the days when June Carter was appearing on the Opry in pantaloons, when Ernest Tubb and Hank Snow were the big stars, when Martha Carson was belting out the gospel and Kitty Wells was stirring my latent-liberated soul by replying that "It Wasn't God who Made Honky Tonk Angels." Those were also the days when my cousins who went to the "county" schools got to go on an overnight trip to the Opry for their eighth grade school trip. I went to the "town" school and only got to go to Shiloh National Military Park. I had also been taken to Shiloh on my 5th, 6th and 7th grade trips, so I knew I was getting cheated. I would come home with a dime replica of the confederate flag and my cousins would come home with a picture book full of Opry stars.

Eventually, I came to believe that going to the town school had its benefits, and I left Minnie and all the other Opry stars behind about the same time that I figured out that country music was hillbilly, i.e., redneck, poor, unsophisticated, and most of all, unpopular. It was roughly about the same time I figured out that my ticket off of that West Tennessee farm was a college degree.

I made it off the farm, got a relatively useless degree, and turned my attention to politics and Bob Dylan. Lately, though, I've been discovering that a lot of the things I gave up are coming back in style—like farms, Jesus, and country music. My memories of farm life are not the kind that lead me to stand in line for the back to the land movement, and I still have a hard time separating Jesus from his institutional structures. But lately, I've been returning to country music like a homing pigeon.

Me and thousands of others. Far from being hillbilly, country music is now the in-thing. Rock stars like Leon Russell (Hank Wilson) and John Fogerty are producing country albums; bluegrass festivals are overrun with longhairs; and country has come to the Las Vegas strip and Max's Kansas City in New York.

The ascension of country music to such prominent status has been a long, slow climb. For years, the city of Nashville ignored it, and then moved on to outright snobbishness. "You could almost feel the people draw back when you said you were a country performer," is the way one veteran described it. Roy Acuff, the "King of Country Music" who recently engaged in some yo-yoing antics on the new Opry House stage with President Nixon entered politics in the early 40's when the governor of the state remarked that he "was disgracing the state by making Nashville the hillbilly capital of the world."¹ It wasn't until the mid-sixties that Nashville, reluctantly abandoned the elusive image of "the Athens of the South," and began to come to terms with its second largest growth industry—music.

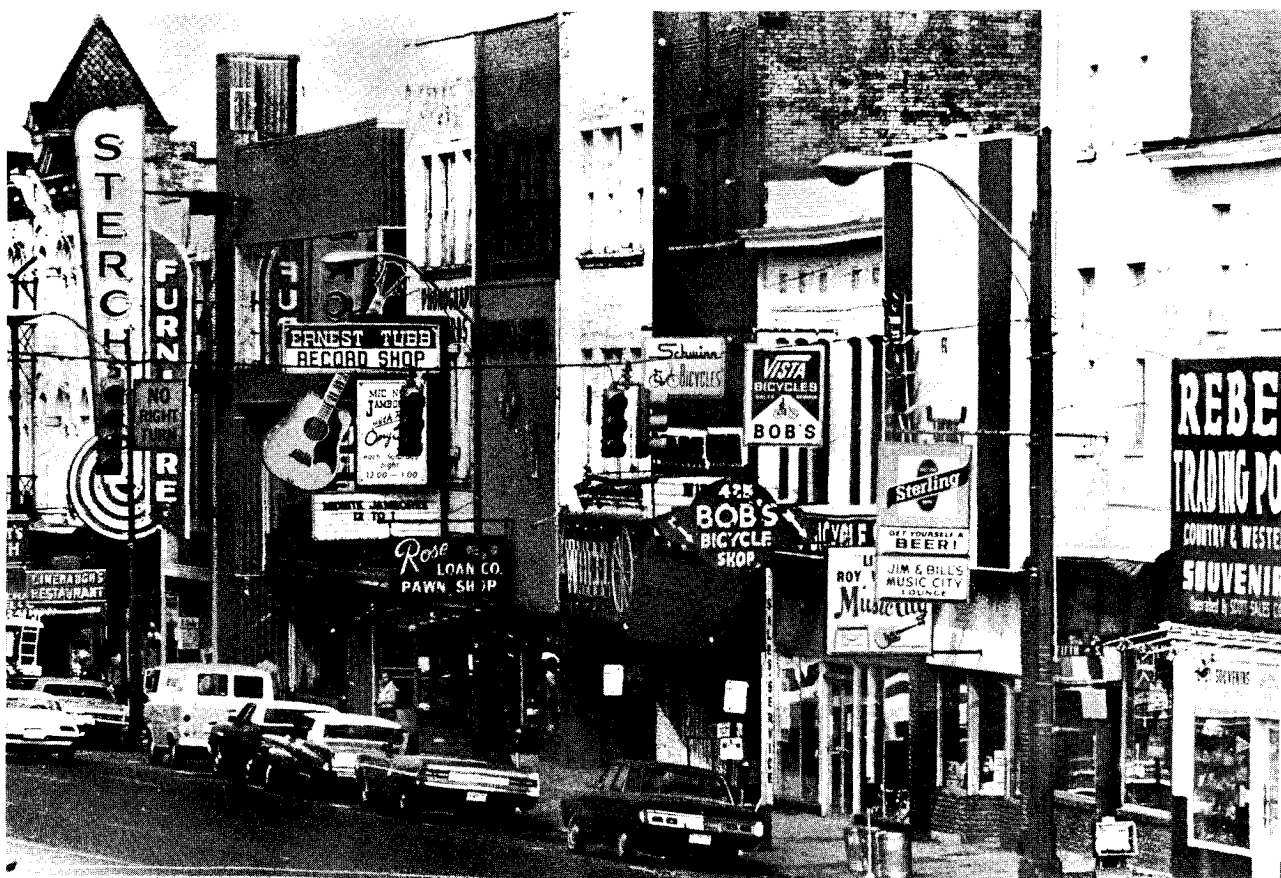


photo by David Doggett

Broadway: the seedier aspects of the country music capital

They're gonna tear down the Grand Ole Opry
 They're gonna tear down the sound
 that goes around our song
 They're gonna tear down the Grand Ole Opry.
 Another good thing has done gone on, done gone on.
 (John Hartford, Robert Taylor, Glaser Publ., Inc.)

Nashville is a funky old town that stretches out along both sides of the Cumberland River. Slower to develop a new concrete and steel facade than most other cities, it is now a combination of worn-out shabby houses, stretches of debris-covered land left by the recent onslaught of urban renewal bulldozers, and an increasing number of shiny new office buildings. Crisscrossing the city is a network of superhighways connecting it with other large southern cities and points north.

On Music Row in particular, the newness is taking over. The major recording studios of Columbia, RCA, and MCA (formerly Decca) now dominate the "Row," which is headed by the Country Music Hall of Fame. Interspersed with the larger structures are the smaller, remodeled

houses which now serve as offices for various publishing companies, talent and booking agencies and small recording studios.

A few blocks away on downtown Broadway, the seedier aspects of the old country music capital are still evident, dominated by the hulk of the Ryman Auditorium, home of the Opry. Until recently crowds continued to line up around the block—reserved seats on one side, general admission on the other.

Ranking next to the Ryman in order of importance and legend is Tootsie's Orchid Lounge, a dark unimpressive hole-in-the-wall which, nevertheless, has a back door directly across the alley from the Opry stage. The walls are covered in photographs, some easily recognizable as Opry stars; others simply the freshly scrubbed faces of Opry-goers who wanted to leave their pictures at Tootsie's. Those that don't leave their picture leave their names and occasionally some scrawled message. There is something encouraging about the equality of Tootsie's; anybody can write their name (magic markers are available behind the bar) or leave their picture on any piece of wall

they can find.

Tootsie Bess, the proprietess, watches over the raunchy crowd. She looks like somebody's grandmother who should be sitting at the head of the table for Sunday-dinner-after-church, but I've heard that she actually uses the diamond studded hatpin that Charlie Pride gave her to chase away drunks and stragglers. Other places along the strip have "live" music, but not Tootsie's. Tootsie's has a jukebox, and like the walls, about half the names are not recognizable. ("I take the big hits off of the juke box a lot of times. The big guys don't need it so much because they've already got it made."²) I read somewhere that Willie Nelson was discovered playing the guitar at Tootsie's while he was half-drunk, and popular history has it that Tom T. Hall and Kris Kristofferson were rather fond of hanging out there and drinking beer while they waited for someone to record the songs they were pitching.

Next door to Tootsie's is the strip's newest business establishment, a massage parlor. (Tootsie doesn't seem to have much competition. I wonder if people write their names and leave their pictures on the walls there.) The rest of the block is taken up by a few souvenir shops, another record store, and a few tacky furniture stores.

Across the street is "live" music at the old Merchant's Hotel, the Wheel, and the Music City Lounge. All of them have house bands, but no one is too possessive of the microphone; anyone who is really itching to sing or play a few hot licks can easily do so.

Linebaugh's is tucked in the middle of the block, conveniently close to the Ernest Tubb Record Shop. Open 24 hours a day, Linebaugh's is the place to hang out and watch for familiar faces. The faces, if not familiar as persons, have familiar looks to match the guitar cases they carry by their side.

No one is quite sure what will happen on Broadway now that the Opry has moved. This particular area will no longer be the focal point for Opry festivities, having been replaced by Opryland's new amusement park. My suspicions are that at least some of the Opry goers will find their way to Broadway out of nostalgia for the Ryman, and of course, Tootsie's, Ernest Tubb's, and Linebaugh's are landmarks within their own rights.

Out along the Row, the rumblings are of a different kind. Here people speak of "the Industry," and the Industry is a very hot item at the moment. All together the music industry brings in over \$200 million annually to the city of Nashville, and the figure is climbing drastically every year. In 1970 Nashville had 20 recording studios; a

recent count put the number at 74. In 1968, some 5500 recording sessions were chalked up; today the number is above 15,000. In addition to the recording studios, the industry includes 29 talent agencies, 750 music publishers, offices for three performing rights organizations, seven trade papers, and seven record pressing plants.

**Turn your radio on and listen to the music in the air
Turn your radio on, heaven's glory share
Turn your lights down low,
and listen to the Master's radio
Get in touch with God, Turn your radio on.**

(Albert E. Brumley, Stamps-Baxter Music and Printing Company)

The Opry and the music industry have grown together in Nashville. It all started in 1925 when George D. Hay, the "Solemn Old Judge," stood in front of a microphone in WSM's downtown studio and introduced an eighty year old fiddler by the name of Uncle Jimmy Thompson on the WSM Barn Dance. Within a few weeks, the Barn Dance had 25 performers, mostly string bands such as Paul Warmack and the Gully Jumpers, George Wilkerson and his Fruit Jar Drinkers, Arthur Smith and his Dixie Liners, Sam and Kirk McGee, the Delmore Brothers, and Uncle Dave Macon. There was also a Mrs. Klein who played the zither, and the Opry's one black performer, Deford Bailey on harmonica.³

It was Bailey's harmonica playing that launched the Opry under its new name. The choice of the name by George Hay was a direct dig at Grand Opera. Hay was waiting in the WSM studio for an NBC network program featuring the New York Symphony to end. In response to a remark by the program announcer about realism in the classics, Hay responded, "You've been up in the clouds with Grand Opera, now get down to earth in a four hour shindig of Grand Ole Opry."

The Opry was an immediate hit with WSM radio listeners, and folks began coming to the studio to watch the show in person. Official Opry history has it that the show was moved when two WSM executives, returning to their offices to work one Saturday night, were not allowed to get inside by an Opry crowd that was on the lookout for line-breakers. The Opry then had successive homes in the Hillsboro Theatre, a large tabernacle in East Nashville, and the old War Memorial Building, where for the first time tickets were sold for 25 cents "to discourage the crowds."

Finally, in 1941, the Opry moved to its home at the Ryman, an auditorium built originally for the revival meetings of the Rev. Sam Jones by one of his

converts, riverboat captain Thomas Ryman. Legend has it that Captain Ryman, who was known for his drinking and gambling, went to the evangelical meeting with the intention of breaking up the meeting, only to be brought to his knees by the good Reverend's sermon on motherhood. Completed in 1892, the building was used exclusively for religious purposes until 1898, when it was secured by the Confederate Civil War Veterans for their annual reunion—an affair that no doubt was as evangelical in nature as the revivals and certainly matched them in fervor. It was for this meeting that the United Daughters of the Confederacy raised the money and built the Confederate Gallery.⁴

Later, as Nashville's city fathers actively pursued the image of the "Athens of the South," the auditorium was used extensively for classical concerts. But when the Opry made its permanent home there in 1941, the cultured atmosphere began to evaporate in the onslaught of funeral parlor fans of the Last Supper, chewing gum stuck judiciously under the pews, and the general unrefined nature of country fans.

In 1902, C.A. Craig invested in an insurance company on the theory that "unlimited success could be attained by "... offering insurance to the lower classes, many with little or no formal education." Years later, his brother, Edward, who was also one of the original founders of the National Life and Accident Insurance Company, lobbied to

begin a radio station because the publicity "the company would gain by use of the radio would help the company's field men sell insurance to the listeners." The new station was christened WSM for We Shield Millions and began operations in 1925.

In keeping with their intention to sell insurance to the lower classes, WSM's prime weapon became the Grand Ole Opry. According to the National Life Corporate Fact Book, "The Opry is probably the most unconventional sales promotion tool ever used by any insurance company. WSM's radio combination of low frequency and 50,000 watts of clear channel enables it to beam the Opry and the National Life and Accident name every Saturday night into more than 30 states comprising the American heartland. The following week National Life and Accident agents are out knocking on doors identifying their company as 'the one that puts on the Grand Ole Opry'." The fact book goes on to say that company officials regard it as a "tremendously valuable sales tool."⁵

William Ivey, Director of the Country Music Foundation believes there have been times that the company has been divided over whether or not to keep the Opry. There were periods when the company was divided internally. . . over whether the Opry should be kept because it didn't always make money. It was not always thriving by any means. Country music didn't dominate the scene anything like it does now. So, I suspect they were divided on it.⁶



photo by David Doggett

Ryman Auditorium: The "Mother Church" of Country Music

Those who were in favor of keeping the Opry were on the winning side, and what may have initially paid off only in insurance sales and good public relations has now proved a sound business investment. In March, 1974, the new Opry House opened at Opryland, a \$40 million complex that includes an amusement park, the Opry House, and a planned development called Opry Town which will include motels, shops, and a convention center. Just as it was able fifty years ago to effectively project and capitalize on the use of radio to sell its product, the National Life and Accident Insurance Company is demonstrating the same business acumen today in their move toward television. The new Opry House is fully equipped with the latest recording and television facilities. In addition to the main auditorium, there is a smaller television production center behind the main stage for smaller productions. There is some speculation that before too long, there will be a regularly scheduled network show originating from Nashville.

The success of the Opry was important to WSM for selling insurance, but it was also important in establishing Nashville as a recording center. According to William Ivey: *I think one of the main functions of WSM is that it provided an almost endless supply of talent to the Nashville music industry, both artists and executives. Fred Rose, who started Acuff-Rose with Roy Acuff, had worked with WSM for awhile as a staff pianist in the 30's. Jack Stapp, who started Tree Publishing—which had all the Roger Miller songs, and really took off with "Heartbreak Hotel"—was the Manager of the Grand Ole Opry for a good number of years. Jim Denny, who started Cedarwood Publishing—they have songs like "Daddy Sang Bass" and "Detroit City"—was manager of the Opry. Now, you see this is purely on an executive level. Frances Preston, who was then Frances Williams, was a receptionist for WSM. She is now head of Broadcast Music Inc. [BMI]. You can just go right down the list. I don't know that WSM was always excited about the fact that they were getting people involved in the music and entertaining business, and then they were leaving to set up their own things, but WSM was very important in that way.*⁷

It was WSM personnel who started Nashville's first recording studio, Castle Records, in a hotel dining room on Eighth Avenue close to the radio station. According to Aaron Shelton, one of Castle's founders, "We saw the need for a recording studio because of the great talent the Opry attracted." But even then, Nashville was looked down on according to Shelton: *Artists just weren't sure it was the thing to do—to record in this little hick town in Tennessee. The big talent would sneak into town,*

*record and leave without anybody knowing it. It took a while for the stars to be sold on Nashville as a recording center. Recording really was an unknown art then. The main thing that attracted the artists was the cooperation of all the people involved . . . the feel that the musicians and engineers had for music . . . something like the personal touch, and maybe more sympathetic treatment of the materials . . . or just plain talent.*⁸



Hank Snow, the Singing Ranger

The recording industry got a major boost in the early 50's when Paul Cohen, who was then with Decca Records, guaranteed Owen Bradley one hundred recording sessions a year if he would build a new studio. Bradley had been operating primarily out of a small concrete block structure doing primarily industrial film work, but on the basis of Cohen's guarantee, he purchased an old duplex on Sixteenth Avenue, South, for a mere \$7500. For another \$7500 he and his brother, Harold, purchased an old quonset hut and placed it at the back of the duplex. The quonset was used initially for filming commercials and storage, but when the sessions became too large for the house, burlap bags were hung around the walls to absorb the acoustics and the quonset became a recording studio. The first recording session in the makeshift studio produced a smash hit for Decca called "The Battle of New Orleans."⁹

Bradley's studio was the beginning of what is now known as Music Row. Columbia Records

purchased the original studio in the 60's and built a new studio around the quonset hut, and today all the major recording studios are either on the Row or nearby.

As the recording industry began to grow, so did its related industries. Acuff-Rose was the first publishing company to set up in the early 40's. One of their early recording artists was Hank Williams, the tortured Montgomery blues singer who died at the age of 29 from "too much living, too much sorrow, too much love, too much alcohol and drugs."¹⁰ Williams' impact on the music today is as magical as it was in 1949 when he appeared on the Opry for the first time and was called back for six encores. The story is told that when Hank wanted to record "My Bucket's Got A Hole In It" Fred Rose thought it was so bad, he walked out of the studio. Williams recorded the song without his A & R man, and Acuff-Rose had another smash hit. Acuff-Rose is still one of the most powerful publishing companies in the city and now has international operations. In addition to Hank Williams, their catalogue includes such notables as Pee Wee King, Charlie and Ira Louvin, Martha Carson, Bill Carlisle, Marty Robbins, Boudleaux Bryant, the Everly Brothers, John D. Loudermilk, Kitty Wells, and Mickey Newberry.

As the industry boomed, new offices continued to open: booking and talent agencies to handle personal appearances for the artists, more publishing companies, record pressing plants, and eventually trade publications. More recently, the impact of the industry has spread to areas unrelated to music. Bill Williams, the Nashville editor of *Billboard*, estimates that today there are fifty lawyers devoting full time to performing rights whereas several years ago there were only two. One of the most obvious by-products of the recent growth can be seen in the numerous hotels and restaurants sprouting up in the vicinity of Music Row. Another boost has come from the universities; today almost all of them offer courses or seminars related to the music industry.

**I bought this rhinestone suit in California
And these boots came all the way from Mexico
This cadillac ain't nothing son,**

**you ought to see the greyhound
I bought to take my band from show to show
You've seen my face a thousand times on TV
And heard me on your local radio show
And in your eyes, I see the admiration there for me
But son there is something that you ought to know**

**Well, I've got to take a drink to keep from shaking
And motel rooms ain't nothing like a home
And money can't make love grow any stronger
When you leave your woman home alone
She can't raise the children with no daddy
She can't love a man who's always gone.
It takes a whole lot more than pride
To keep your feelings locked inside
While you sing another pretty country song**

**Well, its true I took some pills to stay awake son
And this diamond ring I wear is just for show
And I've got a little cabin in the country
When I'm not on the road, that's where I go
Try and put my feelings down on paper,
Right or wrong the show has to go on
And I cry deep down inside and keep on smiling
While I sing another pretty country song.**

(David Allen Coe, Window Music, Inc.)

In the early days of the Opry, instrumental music dominated, particularly the fiddle and banjo, and whatever singing occurred was incidental. This changed, however, when Roy Acuff and his Smokey Mountain Boys came to the Opry in 1938. His renditions of "The Great Speckled Bird" and the "Wabash CannonBall" became Opry favorites and Acuff was soon followed by Eddy Arnold (then known as the Tennessee Plowboy), Cowboy Copas, and Ernest Tubb.

The Opry book describes Tubb as having childhood dreams of being a screen cowboy until he heard and admired the records of the late Jimmy Rodgers.¹¹ He bought his first guitar for \$5.95, began practicing his yodeling in the pasture, and eventually got his own radio program in San Antonio. Tubb joined the Opry in 1943 after his song "I'm Walking the Floor Over You" became a hit. He opened his now famous record store three years later a half a block away from the Ryman. In an interview with Marshall Fallwell on one of the Opry's final weekends, Tubb reminisced about his own career and his friend, Hank Williams.

Oh, I guess I been everywhere. I still go out on the road about 200 days a year. I figured it out once. Since I began, I've averaged about 100,000 miles a year. Back when I started, it was hard travelin'. You see, there weren't no buses or planes like there are now. Another thing, you had to be back in Nashville every Saturday night, come hell or high water, for the Opry. No matter where you were. In the forties, it was rough, too, because of the war. The hardest thing was finding bootleg tires. I wouldn't do anything else though. I had a lot

of jobs and I hated them all. During the Depression, I worked all over Texas doing everything from threshing wheat to digging sewer ditches at Randolph Field.

Back in 1949, when I finally got Jim Denny, who was the manager of the Opry, to let Hank Williams come on my show; Hank promised me he wouldn't drink for six months. He said, "Lord, I'd crawl all the way to Nashville on my stomach if they'd let me be on the Opry. Ernest, if you let me come with you, I'll never take another drink." I said, "Son, don't say something you can't do, but if you quit for six months, I'll try to get you on the show." Well, not many people know this, but Hank Williams, to my knowledge, didn't take a single drink for nine months. And I know, because he was on my show and I worked closely with him.¹²

Throughout the 40's and early 50's, Nashville continued to grow as the country music capital of the world. Stars like Hank Williams, Martha Carson, Kitty Wells, Marty Robbins, Ferlin Husky, Patsy Cline, Grandpa Jones, Stringbean, Charlie and Ira Louvin, Mother Maybelle and the Carter Sisters, Webb Pierce, Bill Monroe, Lefty Frizzell and Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs were launched from the Opry stage.

One of the Opry listeners was a young man by the name of Porter Wagoner in West Plains, Missouri. I started off in a grocery store. I worked in the butcher shop and I was a stock boy. The man I worked for knew that I played the guitar and sang so he asked me to bring it down to the store and sing some songs for him. So I did and he liked it and he said he'd like for me to do a 15 minute show



photo from The Country Music Story

Hank Williams, "too much living, too much sorrow,
too much love, too much alcohol and drugs."

on radio from the store each morning early and tell 'em what our specials that day was, you know. So, I started on the air at 6 in the morning. I'd go down and open the store and just when it'd come 6:15 they'd give me a cue and I'd start picking and singing. A bus driver passing through West Plains heard Porter and persuaded the manager of a radio station in Springfield, Missouri, to go down and listen to him. Porter moved to Springfield in 1949 to become a regular on the station, and started recording for RCA Victor one year later.

I started recording in 1950. I never did have a hit for five years. Any more, of course, if you don't get a hit with a company within a year, they drop you. But back then there wasn't that much talent around and they gave me that long. In 1955 I had "Satisfied Mind" which was the Song of the Year. That opened many doors to me.

Porter became an Opry regular in 1956—and like many other Opry stars realized one of his greatest ambitions.

Well, we listened to the Grand Ole Opry. I never dreamed of getting to come to see it, much less be on it, because it was like a million miles away. I liked all the stars on the Grand Ole Opry—Roy Acuff, Bill Monroe, Ernest Tubb—and then Hank Williams, of course, was an idol of mine. I liked his songs because they all said something, they told a story.

I used to be plowing in the field and I'd pretend I was on the Grand Ole Opry. And I'd emcee and introduce, "Now here's a great star of country music, ladies and gentlemen, let's give him a big welcome to our show. . . ." I'd be down there by myself in the dust. One day the boy that lived on the farm next to ours—I didn't know there was anybody in miles—he was standing at the end of the field and he heard me talking to myself, emceeing you know, and he asked me what I was a-doing. And I told him I was practicing, someday I was going to the Grand Ole Opry. He said, yeah, I know you are. You'll be looking at these mules you're plowing when you're 65 if you're able.¹³

After going through a major slump in the late fifties and early sixties, when the full impact of rock and roll hit, Nashville began to slide into a period of major growth in the mid-sixties. Chet Atkins, head of RCA Victor in Nashville had always had trouble in the country music business because he wasn't "country" enough, and had been fired from several radio jobs for that reason. As the Vice-President of RCA Victor and a major country producer, he began to develop a "sound" that was not traditional country, utilizing choral groups, horns, and strings as background in lieu of the traditional country accompaniments of steel

guitar, fiddle, and banjo. The result was a sound that enabled many country records to gain popularity in the pop field as well as country.

Word also began to spread about the Nashville Sound that was being generated by the studio sidemen. The Nashville style was to go into a studio, run through a song several times to let everyone get the feel of it, and then put it down on tape. More and more artists began to gravitate toward Nashville in search of relaxed recording sessions. New names were added steadily to the star list during this period. Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton, Bill Anderson, Tom T. Hall, Tammy Wynette, Merle Haggard, and many more. Johnny Cash, Conway Twitty and others who left during the slump returned to country.



photo by Carter Tomassi

Bill Monroe

Today the city is a rich amalgam of its not-so-popular past, and its very-bright-looking future. The entire town is suffused with a sense of growth, excitement, and change—perhaps best symbolized in the opening of the new Opry House. Rhinestone suits, superstars, cadillacs and custom-made buses are still very much in evidence, co-existing alongside some scroungy looking longhairs who are making the scene as writers, musicians, producers, and record company executives. William Ivey believes that Nashville is still a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, but sees changes coming:

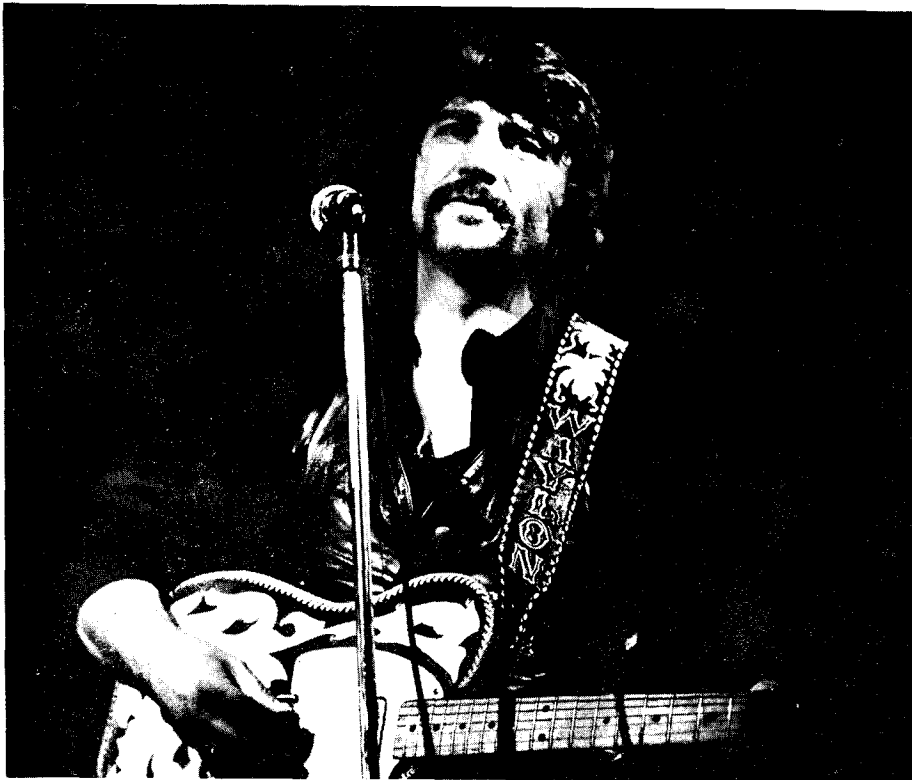


photo by Roger Allen Grigg

Waylon Jennings

The country music industry is really small-townish and personal, and the big-time show biz paranoia which you see taking over some other segments has not yet taken over Nashville or Bakersfield, or even the country music people in Los Angeles. It still is a community; there is still a feeling you could get all the important country music executives into a medium sized room, and they would all know one another. . . . The super big media business, where you protect yourself with a lot of paper and a lot of contracts, four attorneys between negotiating people and so on, hasn't yet developed in the country music scene.

It probably will, because country music is very hot right now. It's coming because it is a natural accompaniment to success. But it is still not present in country music in the degree it is in motion pictures, straight pop music or television, and that is an advantage. That gives Nashville a lot of strength.

I think the people who are running the country music industry are mainly people who started out with nothing, got into country music when there was no status in it of any kind, and no money. So they were in it for the love of the music and love of the other people, and all of a sudden they have become successful. But that is still a secondary thing. They would still be there if things were back where they were in the 40's and 50's—no status, no money. Now, maybe the next generation is not

going to be that way. The next generation may just be in country music because it is profitable.

It is changing. Partly because the people who started the industry are reaching retirement age, and it just happened that way you know. Like Chet Atkins, he is not retirement age, but he decided about two years ago to move into more personal things—do a little more playing and less administrative work. He was here in the middle and late 40's, actually when it was just getting started. And Don Law who was a super producer for country stuff for Columbia back in the middle 30's. He co-produced many of the original Bob Wills sessions. He is semi-retired. Owen Bradley is in his early 60's; he was the head of Decca, which is now MCA, for years and years.

So as this group of people hands over control to the next generation, I suspect there will be some changes.¹⁴

The changes are occurring rapidly: an influx of new record labels setting up Nashville division offices with accompanying changes in personnel and style; a "new" audience that is younger, better-educated and wealthier; and an "old" audience that has steadily become more urban and consumer oriented. Purists are apt to dismiss the recent era as "commercial," and while it may be an appropriate adjective, it is an insufficient label. Country music has always reflected the culture from which it comes, and its recent success at the market place is no exception.

Country music today and the country music you heard on the Opry in 1938 is parallel to the difference between the music you heard on the south side of Chicago in 1948 when Muddy Waters and Howlin' Wolf had just come up there from Mississippi and the music you heard in Detroit with Diana Ross and Stevie Wonder and that crowd. It is just what happens when you start to get sophisticated musical minds, and sophisticated songwriters and businessmen involved with a whole tradition. It gets to be this hybrid that takes something from commercial music, from tin pan alley, and also something from the folk tradition.

It's gained an urban intelligentsia. It's gained the middle, middle class. But college kids are not a very good audience; they are extremely fickle. They move from fad to fad, and they'll love bluegrass for a while and drop it and then move on to B.B. King for five years, and then go on to this or that. So I don't consider that change to be all that important. I don't think the music will ever play to that audience, and I don't think that country music has lost or abandoned its traditional audience. That is why I think the new Opry House will succeed.¹⁵

**Willie, you're wild as a Texas blue northern
Ready-rolled from the same makings as me
And I reckon we'll ramble till hell freezes over
Willie the wandering gypsy and me.**

(Billy Joe Shaver, Return Music, Inc.)

The new audience cannot be ignored, however, and regardless of how fickle it may eventually turn out to be, it is there now. Its representatives in Nashville are the laidback country cowboys, sometimes referred to as "underground," third-generation country, or hip-billies.

It's hard to get at what distinguishes Nashville's new breed, although surface indications are easy enough—denims and leather as opposed to Nudie's rhinestoned and sequined suits. Long hair. Beards, sometimes. The more subtle importance of the cowboys is harder to figure. Musically they are closer to, and in the case of Waylon Jennings, come out of—the rockabilly tradition of the mid-fifties, the raunchy gut-country blues that Sun Records was producing in a makeshift studio in Memphis under the tutelage of Sam Phillips. Elvis Presley,



photo by David Doggett

Billy Joe Shaver, third generation country cowboy

Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, and even Charlie Rich were on the Sun roster, producing hit after hit that let the country know that music wasn't just for easy listening.

The rockabilly influence was soon put in check, however, as the Nashville sound moved toward strings, horn and choral background provided by the Anita Kerr Singers—not exactly the kind of music to get down and get it on with. Could be, though, that rockabilly is coming back to haunt Music Row in the persons of the cowboys, who, like their early counterparts, are just too successful to be ignored.

It is unclear whether the cowboys take themselves more seriously than the rest of Nashville. One writer, who is definitely not underground, wondered if there wasn't some "putting on" going on. Others simply shrug and say there is "room for everybody" in Nashville. A few others openly express hostility. Whatever their associates think of them, the underground cowboy image is comfortable for the cowboys themselves. And while there may be room for everybody in the town, the atmosphere around Glaser Recording Studio, the Burger Boy, or just any old pinball machine you can find is definitely more relaxed for most of them.

Willie Nelson is sometimes credited with beginning the irreverent cowboy movement. (Sometimes it's Kris Kristofferson. Sometimes Mickey Newberry.) Nelson was under contract to RCA Victor for years, produced a number of albums for them, and wrote a good many of Nashville's hit songs. But as Billy Joe Shaver remarked, "I don't think they knew what they had a hold of." Willie Nelson left Nashville and went back to Texas and is now in the center of a whole new blend of music that is seeping out over the Texas border.

The cowboys may be chaffing right now about Nashville's uneasy acceptance of their music, but it seems likely that their time is at hand. Songwriters like Kris Kristofferson, Willie Nelson, Billy Joe Shaver, David Allen Coe, Lee Clayton, Johnny Darrell, Linda Hargrove and Buzz Rabin are becoming increasingly popular within the Nashville scene while people like John Prine, Leon Russell and the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and others look to Nashville for influence in their own music.

**Hell, I just thought I'd mention
my grandma's old age pension
Is the reason I'm a-standing here today
I got a good Christian raising
and an eighth grade education
There ain't no need in y'all a-treating me this way.**
(Billy Joe Shaver, Return Music, Inc.)

Traditionally country music has not strayed from the theme of broken hearts and very discreet cheating—with occasional references to the Bible, Mother, and how hard it is for poor folks to make a living. Regardless of the seeming limitations of the topic, country lyrics have always been direct and to the point—articulating in songs familiar feelings and situations that their audience might otherwise have been hard pressed to find a way to express. The words seldom present the world as pretty; they're more apt to tell you how bad it is and where you can go for a little comfort.

Dave Hickey, writing in *Country Music* magazine summed it up well: "...lyrically pop songs present the world as it ought to be, as it exists in the dreams of various record executives, and adolescents. Country lyrics, on the other hand, are about the world as it is; they are made by adults for adults—not rich and famous ones, just grown-up people making it from day to day. . . . If pop music is about that distance between the stars above and the audience below, then country music, at least for me, is about the community they share."¹⁶

One of the shared communities has been the hillbilly ghettos of the northern industrial cities, where they have gone to make \$5 a day on the assembly line when the farms gave out. "Detroit City," "Streets of Baltimore," and the more recent "Streets of Chicago" are stories about displaced homesick migrants.

Home folks think I'm big in Detroit City
From the letters that I write they think I'm fine
But by day I make the cars
and by night I make the bars
If only they could read between the lines
Oh, how I wanna go home.
(Mel Tillis, Cedarwood Publishing Company)

I sold my farm and took my woman
where she wanted to be
We left our farm and all our kin
back there in Tennessee
I bought those one-way tickets
she had often begged me for
And they took us to the streets of Baltimore.
(Harlan Howard, Tree International Publishers)

Merle Haggard, one of country music's most successful writer/performers writes hard-hitting songs that have endeared him to blue collar workers all over the country. Although he is often better known for his "Okie From Muskogee" and "Fighting Side of Me," his songs like "Hungry Eyes," "Tulare Dust," and "Mama Tried" are reminiscent of those penned by Woody Guthrie in the 30's.



Photo by Gene Guerrero

Country Charlie Pride

He dreamed of something better
and my mama's faith was strong
And us kids were just too young to realize
That another class of people
kept us somewhere just below
One more reason for my mama's hungry eyes.
(Merle Haggard, Blue Book Music Corp.)

Johnny Russell's hit, "Rednecks, Whitesocks and Blue Ribbon Beer" plays on the same theme as "Okie" and "Fighting Side," but in a less aggressive way. "Rednecks" doesn't put anyone else down; It is just a proud song about why people stick together:

No, we don't fit into that white collar crowd
We're a little too rough, and a little too loud
There's no place that I'd rather be than right here
With my redneck, whitesocks, and blue ribbon beer.
(Bob McDill, Jack Music, Inc.)

I've always been particularly grateful for Dolly Parton's song "In the Good Old Days (When Times were Bad)." Nostalgia for the good old days and recurring romanticism about poor folks is running rampant, and Dolly's song is as good an answer as any for those who for some uncanny reason think that being poor and being righteous is the same thing.

We'd get up before sunup to get the work done-up
We'd work in the fields till the sun had gone down
We've stood and we've cried
as we've helplessly watched
A hail storm a-beating our crops to the ground
We've gone to bed hungry many nights in the past
In the good old days when times were bad.

No amount of money could buy from me
The memories that I have of them
No amount of money could pay me
To go back and live through them again

I've seen daddy's hands break open and bleed
And I've seen him work till he's stiff as a board
And I've seen mama lay in sickness and suffering
In need of a doctor we couldn't afford
Anything at all was more than we had
In the gold old days, when times were bad.

(Dolly Parton, Owepar Publishing Company)

Country lyrics have always implied a strong class consciousness, but its consciousness about race and women is of a different nature. Hillbilly, redneck music is as close to southern black music as are the two communities in a Mississippi delta town, and as far away from acknowledging that closeness as the history of the times. Hank Williams learned to play guitar from an old black man in Montgomery while he helped him shine shoes; Jimmy Rodgers learned to accompany his lonesome yodels by hanging around Negro workers in the railroad yards; and Carl Perkins, the son of a white sharecropper, used to trek across the fields at night to the other side of the plantation to learn to play the guitar from a black sharecropper. Paul Hemphill in his book, *The Nashville Sound*, notes: *The influence of the Negro on country music has been considerable over the years, for obvious reasons. In the beginning, country music belonged to the poor white rural southerner and "soul" or "blues" belonged to the Negro. Living side by side in the South, their hopes and fears and joys and failures essentially the same, it was natural that they should share musical tastes and borrow from each other.*"¹⁷

But like other things borrowed from the black community, it was carried safely back to the white side of town. When the Opry started, it had one black performer, Deford Bailey, who could play a mean harmonica and was one of the first artists to record on the Victor label. Bailey left the Opry after 15 years: "I wasn't getting but four or five dollars a night and they kept me standing in the back." (George Hay referred to him as the Opry "mascot" and "like others of his race, lazy.")

The blatant kind of racism that characterized country music in earlier years is now as subdued and institutionalized as it is elsewhere in the country. Country Charlie Pride, a black man from Sledge, Mississippi, who grew up listening to the Opry, is one of RCA's hottest recording stars and plays to packed houses wherever he goes—to white audiences who, if they can afford it, probably send their kids to Christian academies to avoid busing. But Pride is the only black performer to make it in any significant way. The music remains essentially the property of the white community. Perhaps more significant in the long run will be the acceptance of songs like Bobby Goldsboro's recent hit, which talks about black and white sharecroppers:

Mama never had a flower garden
Cause cotton grew right up to our front door
Daddy never went on a vacation
He died a tired old man at 44
Our neighbors in the big house called us rednecks
Cause we lived in a poor sharecropper's shack
The Jacksons down the road were poor just like we were
But our skins were white and theirs was black

I believe the South is gonna rise again
But not the way we thought it would back then
I see everybody walking hand in hand
Yes, I believe the South is gonna rise again.
(B. Braddock, Tree Publishing Company).

Kitty Wells gained the title "Queen of Country" in the mid-fifties when her answer to "The Wild Side of Life" called "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels" was a big hit. But it was hardly a contest; she was one of the few women singers around. Kitty Wells, Martha Carson, and Wilma Lee Cooper were all overshadowed by their male contemporaries, and it is still difficult even now to track down information on women singers in the early days of country music. Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper remember the reluctance of companies in the early days to record female singers:

Wilma Lee: When we started, there weren't many women singers in the business at all. Just a few. Back then, they always said they couldn't sell a woman singer on records.

Stony: Now, there was a woman singer by the name of Cousin Emmy. Terrific showman. Done well enough singing, and could pick a banjo like Stringbean. Well, Decca tried her, and she did a fantastic job on "Ruby, Are You Mad At Your Man." But they couldn't sell it, I never could understand why they couldn't sell women singers in the country field, but they just didn't do it. Now there were very few when Wilma and I started

recording; I think I can say there probably wasn't over five girl singers.¹⁸

Eventually, "girl" singers did begin to sell. Kitty Wells hung in there (she had been singing for 15 years before she made it with a hit), and was followed eventually by Patsy Cline, and later Loretta Lynn, Dottie West and Jean Shepherd. Today women are some of Nashville's biggest superstars.

Although their professional status has improved drastically, the portrayal of women in the lyrics has not. Women are presented in a variety of roles: cheaters (*Putting on my makeup/ putting on the one that really loves me*); loving wives who passively accept a double standard (*I guess someday she knows I'll come home to stay/ That's why my woman keeps loving her man*); whores (*If fingerprints showed up on skin/ wonder whose I'd find on you*); lovers (*Nobody knows what goes on behind closed doors*); flirts (*She had ruby red lips, coal black hair/ And eyes that would tempt any man*); and mothers (*The full cost of my love is no charge*). Whether the image presented is that of a loving wife or a whore, the role is always defined within the context of the woman's relationship to a man. Very seldom do women surface as independent human beings. Again, I think some of Dolly Parton's songs are exceptional. "Don't Let It Trouble Your Mind," "That's Just the Way I Am," and "Just Because I'm a Woman" reflect an independence and spirit that is rare.

Even though you may not understand me
I hope that you'll accept me like I am
For there are many sides of me
My mind and spirit must be free
I don't know why, its just the way I am.

.....

I'd rather have you go than stay
And put me down, a-thinking you're above me
Our love is so wound up, it's best that we unwind
And if you don't love me, leave me
And don't let it trouble your mind.

(Dolly Parton, Owepar Publishing Company)

As more women begin to make it both as writers and performers, the image is bound to change. Linda Hargrove, for example, a young singer/songwriter says, "In my music I try to bring a total picture out . . . to see women as more than just useful."

In the end, however, the changing image of women cannot and should not be left only to women writers. For instance, I really can't remember Tom T. Hall writing a song that diminishes in any way the people he writes about. "Ravishing Ruby" the truckstop waitress is sketched as gently and lovingly as the kid hitchhiking through Kentucky.

Willie Nelson's concept album, *Phases and Stages*, (Atlantic, SD-7291) devotes one side to the "woman's side" and is very well done.

Washing the dishes, scrubbing the floor
Caring for someone who doesn't care anymore
Learning to hate all the things that she once loved to do.

After carefully considering the whole situation
And I stand with my back to the wall
Walking is better than running away
And crawling ain't no good at all.
(Willie Nelson, Willie Nelson Music, Inc.)

Of course, there may be some hope for down-right militance. Hidden away on Tanya Tucker's latest album is a song about Molly Marlow, a woman who is raped when she is young, and gets her revenge years later when as a nurse she either kills or deliberately lets her abductor die.

**What a beautiful thought I am thinking
Concerning a Great Speckled Bird
Remember her name is recorded
On the pages of God's holy word.**

**Desiring to lower her standards
They watch every move that she makes
They long to find fault with her teachings
But really they find no mistakes.**

Yes, of course, country music is changing. It changed when folks began moving off the farms and out of the mountains into the factories and honky tonks of the northern industrial cities; it changed again when Elvis Presley and Jerry Lee Lewis uncovered some repressed white country soul; and it changed some more when Johnny Cash and Hee Haw began making it into people's living rooms on color TV sets. No doubt it will continue to change.

And yes, it is commercial, reflecting as always with painful accuracy the world around it. There was never any legitimate reason to believe that country music should remain a pocket of purity in a plastic environment, or "country" in an urban society. But country music has always had a knack for making bearable the hard times and immortalizing the good. There's no reason to think now that it can be contained inside the chain link fence at Opryland anymore than it could be contained in the WSM studio in the 30's. As long as there is the same compelling need for honesty somewhere in our lives, country music will continue to have a growing audience.

Footnotes

1. Robert Shelton, *The Country Music Story* (Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), pp. 81-82.
2. Jerry Thompson, "Tootsie: Funky First Lady of Honky-Tonk," *Country Music* magazine, Vol. 2, No. 7 (March, 1974), p. 32.
3. There is some dispute about who the first performer on the Barn Dance was. Other accounts have Dr. Humphrey Bate and his band preceeding Uncle Jimmy Thompson. See "Setting the Opry Record Straight," *Billboard* (April 20, 1970), p. N-10.
4. *Ibid.*, p. N-4.
5. "Nashville's Rich Rob the Roost," *The Real Dirt* newspaper, Nashville, Tenn., 1973.
6. Interview with William Ivey, Director of the Country Music Foundation, Nashville, Tennessee, March 5, 1974. The Country Music Foundation includes the Country Music Hall of Fame and Library. The Foundation publishes quarterly *The Journal of Country Music*.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Billboard*, p. N-14.
9. *Ibid.*, p. N-6.
10. Shelton, p. 91.
11. See also Shelton, pp. 55-69.
12. Marshall Fallwell, "E.T. Remembers," *Country Music* magazine, Vol. 2, No. 8 (April, 1974), p. 72.
13. Gene Guerrero, "Interview with Porter Wagoner and Dolly Parton," *Great Speckled Bird*, May, 1971.
14. Ivey Interview.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Dave Hickey, "Dolly Parton's Songs Have Real Soul," *Country Music*, Vol. 1, No. 6 (February, 1973), pp. 28-29. Hickey consistently writes some of the best articles appearing on country music. His "Growing Up on the Jax Beer Highway" (*Country Music*, II, 3), is a real delight, and his writing on the Nashville cowboys is so perceptive, it leads you to believe he might be one. See "In Defense of the Telecaster Cowboy Outlaws" and "Billy Joe Shaver: An Overnight Success After Six Years," *Country Music*, Vol. 2, No. 5 and No. 2.
17. Paul Hemphill, *The Nashville Sound: Bright Lights and Country Music* (Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 109.
18. Interview with Wilma Lee and Stony Cooper, Nashville, Tennessee, March 8, 1974.

In addition to these specific sources, I interviewed several people in Nashville who were particularly helpful: Harlan Howard, Billy Joe Shaver, Tom T. Hall, Paul Tannen (Screen Gems, Inc.), Steve Young, Louise Scruggs, David Allen Coe, and Bud Wendell (general manager of Opry Land). Bill Monroe, Vassar Clements, Loretta Lynn, Natt Stucky, and Johnny Russell were interviewed in Atlanta. Portions of these interviews were published in *The Great Speckled Bird* during April and May, 1974.



photo by David Doggett

TOM T. - telling stories

The Storyteller. That's what they call Tom T. Hall. He tells stories in song. Sometimes they're tall tales; sometimes they're just funny little incidents. But most of the time they're poignant recreations of scenes that are so familiar we're apt to draw back a little. His normal procedure is to bring out in sensitive detail the substance that most of us pay little attention to, simply because it's easier that way. The man in his pickup truck who has just finished digging the grave and is now watching the funeral service and wondering about his \$40. The Vietnam veteran returning home with both legs shot off, and thinking about how people are going to respond. Ravishing Ruby, the truck stop waitress who ain't got no time for anybody but the man who never comes. The young girl huddled in the corner booth of the hotel bar, and the old black man in the Miami bar who is wise enough to know that the only things he can trust are old dogs, children, and watermelon wine. People and situations that we usually choose to ignore. Tom T.

looks hard at them and then insists that we listen too.

He came to Nashville in 1964, following careers as a bundle boy in an overall factory, a graveyard and factory worker, and a disc jockey. The following is excerpted from an interview with him in Nashville, March 7, 1974.

—Sue Thrasher

What pushed you into songwriting rather than some other kind of writing?

I was better at it, I suppose. I always wrote songs. . . ever since I was nine years old when I wrote a whole song. I don't know. I bummed around a lot when I was a kid and then I would read about writers and that's what they did. So I said, since I've worked in graveyards, and factories, and lumber mills . . . washed windows and spent three years in the Army. . . I left home when I was fifteen. I didn't run away. I just left, you know, and went to work in an overall factory as a bundle boy.

*And I thought,
"Well hell, since I didn't come to the party through the front door,
it really doesn't matter how I conduct myself."*

Was there a certain point where you made a conscious decision to start performing your own material, or had you always wanted to do that?

No, I had never wanted to do that. See, what happened, I had written many songs, because that is all I did, and I mean I would just hang out wherever and travel around and write songs, and I was making enough to live, which is a great compliment to a songwriter. I was a bachelor. So, I was just writing songs, and so I had about a dozen that I thought were really cool songs, and nobody liked them. I couldn't get them recorded on the street, and they had asked me to record before. I had said, "Well, I don't want to pick; I just want to write." But after I had all these songs and I couldn't get them recorded, Jerry Kennedy at Mercury said, "Let's record some of them," and I said "Okay." And that's what got me into all this trouble.

You know when I first got to Nashville, I thought I had gotten here too late. Seemed like when I got here the town sort of staggered around for about six months—maybe that's because I got here, I don't know. But it seemed like there was something really bad going to happen to the music, you know. Then, there were a couple of songs that really made a lot of sense, you know. "Honey," "Little Green Apples," "King of the Road," and then "Harper Valley." Then people started saying what the hell is going on down there?

Those songs were all so country, so obviously country. You know Dean Martin used to sing country and nobody ever knew it. They thought it was just songs. Then somebody said, that's country music. Country music has this terrible thing, you know, its called hillbilly music, and the connotation that runs around with that is stupid, illiterate, irresponsible, disloyal. I think hillbillies are credited with everything except communism, and that's probably to be a communist you have to be a super intellect. Or at least have two years of college. I'm not impressed with "not being country." You know, people will say, "You're not really country are you?" and I'll say, yeah. What they are trying to say is, I really dig this, and if its country I couldn't dig it because I'm too hip. That's not a compliment to me. Its like you're a white nigger, you know. Its not really a compliment.

It seems to me there is a whole new audience for country music, more middle class, more educated college students who have really grabbed on to it and dig it—an audience tht comes at the music from a

different direction than its traditional audience.

I don't think so. No, I think people who were raised in Queens, New York, are still just as turned off to country music as they ever were. I think we are living in an affluent society—this is an affluent age—there is no country left. My people live in the country; they have station wagons, two cars, color television. There is very little country left. It really is an oddity to find somebody who lives out in the country, because you know, all the interstates, the communication. The people who always liked country music are just all of a sudden wearing tuxedo's and driving cadillacs, and people are saying, "Well, why do people like that like country music because at one time they were barefoot in the country like me. Its just that we breed a lot. That's what it is. There is more of us, and there is not as much pretension.

I'm playing to a lot of college students, but they come out to the auditoriums to see the show. I think most of these opinions that we have about whose listening—you know, kind of "Hello out there." We don't know who we are talking to, just some more people in my estimation. You know a lot of truck drivers have kids in college, and they grew up with country music and they have always liked it, so why not keep on liking it. I'm not impressed with college kids. I don't see any need to be. Just because they can run faster. They may look cooler, but they don't know what I know. I'm 37 years old.

Nobody who is 19 years old grew up in the country, because there isn't any country. There is no place to grow up in the country. Very few isolated little pockets of people live in what you call country. But there are tourist attractions like Indian reservations.

Country is getting up in the morning; growing your own food, milking the cows, feeding the chickens, I suppose. Isn't that what it is? But what kid has time to do that? What kid would do that today? What kid needs to? All of these farms within a hundred miles of Nashville are subdivided, or they are owned by people who want to write them off on their taxes. So, now country music takes on a new meaning because we are singing like about the old west. Right? And there is a romanticism involved in country because what was it? A lot of young people who don't like the establishment and what is going on, they're moving into the country, and they are living the way I grew up, but people think they are weird. Really a terrible way to live. You get up in the morning and the whole house is like outside, and then the oldest boy or girl has got to get up and build fires in

that damn place, and then you've got to go get two buckets of water from the spring, and the snow is up to your ass, and who wants it?

Have you had a hard time with people accepting your songs—politically, but in the broad sense of that word?

Well, I read in the *Rolling Stone* that I didn't get any award because the Country Music Association (CMA) had roundly slapped me for not being true country, and I was flattered by that. I thought I was just a no-talent son-of-a-bitch, you know. But, it turned out that they thought there was politics involved. I don't know. I don't conform very much; I have some weird opinions about things, and I try to look into my own . . . you know, I have a desire to be left alone by organizations. You see, what I do is write, and I pick, and I sing. There is some basic thing about an organization getting together and having a contest without asking me for my permission. I don't know what that is; I know they are trying to help. But I wonder whose original idea, and what their motives were to say let's form an organization and promote Tom T. Hall. You know, its kind of something for nothing. They are promoting country music and I'm a part of it. So, I don't know. There is something in my mind that makes me question the motives of an organization because they kind of sit in judgment.

What are you going to do next? Are you going to keep on writing songs, or are you going to try some other things?

I don't know. One day at a time, I guess. I don't leave out the possibility that I would do anything. I don't like people . . . the only thing wrong with show business sometimes is that people get the impression you're a candy-ass, and I don't like that. I like to drink a little and have a good time and keep it pretty loose, because you get too plastic. You're walking around reading your press and you look like an 8 by 10 glossy, and I don't like that. Then you meet people who are very influential and cultured, well-educated, well-traveled and they take you to all these nice restaurants and everything, and I kind of enjoy that. But I can't be like they are, because that is not what I do. Its too bad, I guess. If I had been a great novelist, then maybe I could have been a snob. I would have had something to be snobbish about. I don't have the confidence in it (writing). I have the confidence in what I wrote yesterday, but you see yesterday's is not a writer, today is a writer. Yesterday . . . you are a writer the day that you write something, the time that you write something. The fact that I wrote good songs yesterday doesn't mean a thing about tomorrow, so everyday you get up and you have a whole new career to start on. You have a better chance because there are more doors opened. Just because you are Tom T. Hall you can't say, "Well, something is bound to happen, so it's a fact.

I was talking to someone earlier in the week who mentioned the phrase "underground country"—people like Willie Nelson, Billy Joe Shaver, I guess you, Waylon Jennings—as being a new breed in Nashville.

Probably. But, if you remember Ernest Tubb and Roy Acuff, they were a new breed in Nashville at one time. There is always a new breed, and they make it sound like a compliment, but its not. The difference between Willie and Waylon and Kristofferson and me or whoever is in that bag, is probably press agents. We just have different press agents. I could grow a beard and they would take my picture and put it out with a beard, you know. I said one time that you can't grow hair on your mind, and it doesn't matter what you look like.

You know I am really proud of myself for having resisted fads, because I didn't have anything to base conformity on. I just grew up and we kind of . . . its sort of like falling down a set of stairs, from one side to the other and up and down, anyway to get to the top or the bottom. And, I thought, well hell, since I didn't come to the party through the front door, it really doesn't matter how I conduct myself. I wasn't invited; I wasn't encouraged. I didn't come with the right motives. I didn't even know the people at the party. Well, I crash life. And so, it doesn't make any difference what I do.

How long are you going to get away with that?

Not very long, because I have people who bug me because I don't join up and sing up and dress up and stand still and shut up and sit down. But you know, man, if you go rocking out there on that stage to whistle and dance, you've got to conform a little, you know what I mean. They'll get me. Too unconventional, but the blessing is that they get us all—I mean conformity, trying to make people think you are a regular guy. If you are mentally on your ass, you're on your ass; that's all there is to it. And as long as I'm mentally on my feet, it doesn't matter whether I am conforming or not.

I feel very close to my fans and people that dig my music. But I think Johnny Cash said it and maybe he was wrong, but he said, "All I really owe them is a good performance." You know, I can't stay on all the time; I can't entertain every minute. Turning my back on the audience is a classic mistake on stage; in my private life if I turn my back on the audience and I look at something else, doing that is mentally dangerous. Mentally turning your back on the audience, and we all do it. We feel guilty because here is this huge many-moleculed animal called the public that has given you everything you have, and you don't dare turn your back on it, but then you have to if you are to be a person as well as an entertainer. And if that doesn't make any sense, I want you to know that it confuses me too. I'm scared. I know they'll get me, but I don't have any choice. . . .

Hey, do y'all want to hear me sing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow?" I love that song. It's got bluebirds in it.



photo by Dolores

Loretta Lynn

*Loretta Lynn has been recognized with almost every award in music including number one female vocalist and entertainer of the year. She is an incredibly charming woman who radiates an intense sincerity both on stage and off. She does not talk about her music without talking about her life; she sees the two as inseparable. The following is excerpted from an interview with her in Atlanta, February, 1974, conducted by Rick Brown and Sue Thrasher. [A full transcript of the interview appeared in *The Great Speckled Bird*, March 4, 1974.]*

My grandpa had a banjo and he always sang and played the banjo. All of us kids would sit there and listen to him play. Things were looking up when I got about eleven years old; daddy got a job in the coal mines, and we got an old battery radio. Man, people would come from miles around to listen to the Grand Ole Opry. We'd sit up and listen all night. I'd go to sleep listening to the Grand Ole Opry.

Of course, I was next to the oldest and I'd have the job of taking care of all the babies. Mommy always had rocking chairs and I'd rock the babies to sleep. I'd sing just as loud as I could sing. Usually songs—true songs that people wrote back in the Holler. I remember Daddy would say, "Loretta, I wish you'd shut up. People can hear you all over the holler." I told Mommy, "Soon as I get married I'm gonna get out of here so I won't have to rock babies to sleep." First thing I knew, I had four of my own right off the bat.

I was married at thirteen, and we left Kentucky and went to the state of Washington. I was pregnant when my husband sent for me, and I went on the train. My mother wrote a letter to the conductor and told him that I was seven months pregnant and I might get sick on the train, and to take real good care of me. Well, I had no money to buy a pillow, and he would give me a pillow every night and turn the seats around for me. Mommy packed me a lunch—biscuits and jam and stuff like that. Of course it took three or four days to get there. I couldn't believe the world was so big. I just didn't—I thought Butcher Holler and right around there was the whole world.

When I left the holler I'd never had another boy friend. I had never seen a car. I had never eaten beef. When we had chicken it was a treat, you know. Well, you just wouldn't—you just don't know what it was like unless you've seen it, unless you've lived it. I'm glad I did go through it because I learned a lot from being poor. And then there were so many of us kids, I got married because... well, I loved my husband. I knew he was the only boyfriend I had ever had. I wouldn't know what it would be like to be single, because I don't remember being single hardly.

When we moved to Washington, we lived right on the Canadian border, just as far away as we could get. My husband was making \$36 a month, and we stayed with these people. Course I washed dishes, and cleaned house, and that helped along too. So I had my first baby there. After my first baby he went to work doing heavy duty mechanic work. Like I say, it was very hard. But that's all right, we made it.

When I started singing, this man from Vancouver, Canada, Mr. Burley, heard me in this little place. He thought I was a good singer, and he just liked me and my husband. Course we was just kids, and he wanted to help us. So, he said, "I want to make a record." So we went to California, and I made this record; the recording studio wasn't half as big as this room here. I got one of these *Country Song Roundup* books, you know, and I thought, "Well, now everybody else writes, why can't I?" So, I wrote this song called "I'm a Honky Tonk Girl." It hit top ten across the nation, but nobody could buy the record.

Mr. Burley had never done nothing like this before, and that's why he didn't know how to get the records out to people. Ah, he didn't know any more about it than I did, so when he first got the records pressed up, me and my husband set night and day and we would put the records in folders and send them. We got—I don't know how we got a list of radio stations, but we did—and we sent them to disc jockeys. We sent out a little postcard and in the corner was my picture, and I wrote all the disc jockeys about me, you know.

I didn't know what was going on, you know. I didn't know anything. When they told me I had a top ten record, I thought everybody had a top ten record. I didn't know any better.

[continued on page 22]

Harlan Howard came to Nashville in 1960, straight from a bookbinding factory in Los Angeles. After working at the factory all day, he would peddle his songs to any music publisher he could find on Sunset Strip. He was also mailing his songs to a publishing company in Nashville, called Pamper Music. Two hits came out of the Nashville mail deliveries: "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down" followed closely by "Heartaches by the Number." Harlan considers "Heartaches by the Number" to be the key song; the royalties from its recording in the pop field by Guy Mitchell enabled him to quit his job at the factory and move to Nashville, where he "had been heading for all my life anyhow."

For fifteen years he has been an integral part of the country music industry. He has written songs for most of its stars, and is considered the "Dean" of Nashville's country writers. I was told that it is over at "Harlan's house" where the writers get together occasionally to sing their songs to each other.

His perceptions of country music, stemming both from his love of it and his disciplined application to his trade for the past fifteen years provide a rare insight into the inner workings of Nashville's growth industry. The following is excerpted from an interview with him in Nashville, March 6, 1974.

--Sue Thrasher

I went to Los Angeles, California in 1955. I never had any particular skills, but you know, a guy can always make a hundred bucks or so in a factory doing anything without skills, and so I had to always stay in industrial cities. I knew there was a music industry in California and I knew that I could do the type of work that I was qualified for out there, plus I knew Hollywood was full of music publishers. From about 1955 to about 1960, I would work, you know, and I would get off work about three o'clock and I would zip over to Hollywood and everytime I saw a publisher's name on the door, I would run up and bug them. Usually I didn't even get in. Looking back now, I was probably just a country bumpkin running up and down with a guitar and a handful of lyrics.

At that time I was working in the factory, but I was hanging around with some guys who are famous in music now—Bobby Bare, Wynn Stewart, and Buck Owens. All of us were kind of starving to death. They were in the music business, but just barely, and we all kind of hung around together—in fact, we all more or less started together.

That was about the time that Presley's Sun records were hitting. They were kinda country, but they were country rock, and he just about dominated the country charts. Country music, like our traditional country music, twin fiddles and all that, almost disappeared from the air waves. I was really getting concerned about it; I thought it might disappear before I could get here. Then, there was one dramatic thing that happened that got country music going again. Ray Price recorded a song called "Crazy Arms." It was a



Harlan Howard

traditional country, fiddling, steel record, and it was the number one record for a complete solid year. ["Crazy Arms" was written by Waylon Jennings's steel guitarist, Ralph Mooney.] This song was such a monster hit for so long that it gave the producers and the country artists the confidence to go in and cut what they were used to cutting, which was country songs done in the country fashion.

I was still out in L.A. then. I was getting a few records, you know. I was slightly in the business, but not enough to make a living. See before I got here I had three hits, a song called "Mommy for a Day" by Kitty Wells that Buck Owens and I wrote, "Pick Me Up On Your Way Down" with Charlie Walker, and Ray Price did "Heartaches by the Number." Then Guy Mitchell did it in the pop field. Those are the three hits that all together got me enough money to get out of that factory. I knew that I was good for a couple of years here and I could survive and do nothing but write. After I got here, I wrote everything else that I've written. In fact, I had the fever. I wrote night and day, like a fiend. I would go to bed at night and I couldn't sleep. Man, I would jump up and write some more. I'm glad those days are over with. It's awful . . . an awful uptight existence.

To me country music is real heavy. Its the real, down to earth music, and I think that is why it gets bigger and better and stronger throughout the years. Man, if the stock market could do what country music does we would be in great shape. It never goes backward, except that one little lapse we had when and roll kinda took over. But ever since then, man, it is just expanding all over the world.

[continued on page 22]

LORETTA

Then Mr. Burley told me he was going to send me to Nashville. He said, "I think you have a lot of talent and I want to keep you. I want to learn more about the business, and maybe we can do something, but if you get a chance to go with a big major label, or something like that, I will release you from the contract." I thought we had to go to Nashville, you know, to make it. So we came all the way to Nashville in 1961, and we went back another way, so we could hit all the radio stations. And all the money we had was money that Mr. Burley gave us. My four kids, now my brother and his wife was taking care of them. It took us about two months because the old car was in bad shape, and we didn't go too many miles a day. We never ate in a restaurant; we had baloney and cheese and crackers, and we slept in the car.

When I got into Nashville, everywhere you would turn the dial you would hear "Honky Tonk Girl." The disc jockeys would say this is a little girl that we just got a card from, a new singer, and this record is a swinger, and I think she is going to be a hit. When I got there, well, naturally they had heard of me, and I got on at Decca Records. So, I called Mr. Burley and he said, "Well, honey, if you can get on another label, I'll tear up your contract."

The first record for Decca was a number one record and it has been like that ever since, you know. I come in as the most promising girl singer in 1962 and 1963. I come in second for girl singer. Patsy Cline got the number one. So, Patsy told me, "Next year you'll get number one" which I never dreamed I would. If it hadn't been for Patsy I don't think I would have ever made it. She kind of pushed me along, and helped me, you know, gave me clothes to wear on stage, told me how to present myself on stage, and took me over just like a mother hen would take a chicken.

Those years were very hard. Those first four years I was working clubs for \$25 and \$50. It was very hard up til about '66, I guess. Of course, every record I had out would make number one, and start selling more, so I got a life-time contract with Decca (now MCA). I guess I've got the best contract that anybody has with MCA records. It's just been great.

I started writing when I started singing. I write mostly true stuff—stuff like "Coal Miner's Daughter," "Don't Come Home A-Drinking," and "You Ain't Woman Enough." I write about things that are happening, the way I feel, you know. I think it is how women feel about their men. Like last night at the club, some woman hollered at me, "Sing 'You Ain't Woman Enough,'" and she said, "I want to say right now there ain't no woman in here woman enough to take my man." She really meant it too. I said, "Now, that's one, but I bet every woman in here feels the same way." You've got to write down the way people feel.

HARLAN

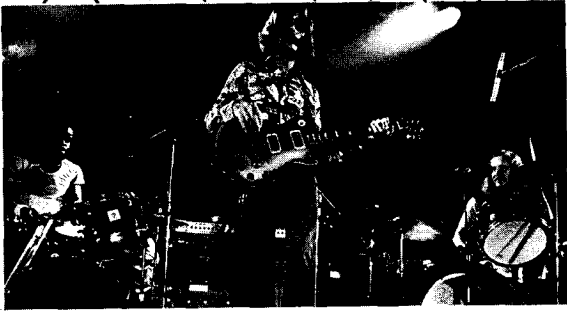
I'll tell you something. I pride myself on being a professional. *Commercial*—beautiful word, commercial. It means you want people to buy your product. You know, I've had some great debates with people in Nashville who don't like the word commercial, but I've always considered that they are kinda selfish. They want to keep their gifts to themselves. I want to share mine with the people. I want to write songs that they want to hear and they want to buy.

You know something that I think a lot of young writers don't realize is that in order to have a hit record, you have to penetrate a fog, because people don't listen as closely as we would like for them to. When I listen to a song, I give it everything I've got, and I don't want anybody to even talk. But, you can imagine a couple driving down the interstate at rush hour on their way to or from someplace, and the radio is on, and they are conversing about the day's events—they might even be arguing and if for some reason or other one of them reaches over and turns the radio up because something catches their attention, then you can just about bet they have turned up a hit. But people are not listening unless they are fanatics, real music fans, and that is not the majority. That is the minority. But people in general just don't listen as close as a lot of kids assume they do. Just because a guy is a young writer, he assumes the whole world is all that hung up on music. They're not. They're hung up on their car payments, and each other's health, and their love life and their jobs. I mean there is a lot more important things in this world to the general public than music. We are just a background. That is all we are. And in order to penetrate through this fog of people's lives and thoughts, we have got to say something and we'd better say it in a simple manner that they can understand. Man, we are just being heard; that line zips by in a hurry and if it is confusing they ain't gonna go do research on it like a scientist. I mean to hell with it; you just blew it, that's all. Either they understood you or they didn't.

I don't want to get back into the treadmill that I was on in the early sixties. I'm going to tell you something, you're uptight and you're nervous. There was one year that I had three songs in the top ten all year and I still wasn't happy. There was no saturation point. When one would drop out, another would take its place. In other words, it was just a fantastic year. I had a bunch of hits that year, and got eleven BMI awards at the dinner. It was my year, you know. But looking back on it, I sure wouldn't want to relive it. I was just too busy writing my song every fifteen minutes. But, I'm glad that is over with to tell you the truth.

You know writers are never going to be completely calm, because there is a little tension about a writer that never disappears. I think creative people are born to sit on the edge of their chair. They just might as well accept that.

SOUTHERN ROCK 'N ROLL



by Steve Cummings

It was only a few years ago that *Rolling Stone*, in what was doubtlessly conceived to be a benevolent gesture, alerted its readers to the existence of a band of "long-haired good old boys" called the Allman Brothers who could "play up a storm." A week later a letter from Athens, Georgia, was published responding in effect, "Sho' was nice of you San Francisco fellers to condescend to mention the Allman Brothers. Wonder how long it'll take you to realize that the South is now producing the best damn rock and roll in the country?"

Seven o'clock on a Thursday night in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. College students stroll along the local main drag, Franklin Street, past picturesque restaurants, colonial-facade banks, and charming boutiques. For someone used to big-city drabness it's all just a little too quaint. Still, it's a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere. In Town Hall, the largest beer-and-boogie emporium in Chapel Hill, a dozen or so students and street people are eating sandwiches from the delicatessen and picking out good seats close to the stage. The Steve Ball Band is playing tonight.

The South never really left the mainstream of rock music, of course. From Elvis and Jerry Lee Lewis to Janis Joplin, Southern musicians continually pumped infectious vitality into periodically dull popular music. Truly good musicians in England and in California recognized this and never ceased to pay verbal (though seldom financial) homage to the bluesmasters, country pickers, and early hard-rockers that had influenced them. But as rock entered the halcyon days of the mid-sixties, the South began to be ignored and even berated by the emerging hip-capitalist music hierarchy. It was hard even to arrange a concert in the South, much less convince smug long-haired executives that there were fine musicians putting together all the old elements of rock in new ways, and indeed, introducing

material previously undreamt of.

The Steve Ball Band is beginning to set up their mountains of sound equipment. They sip beers and chat with "regulars"—the people who follow them from gig to gig. Like their friends, the band members are North Carolina Piedmont freaks. They wear work-shirts, old-jeans, and shit-kicker boots while their hair has been studiously protected from the ravages of "stylists." All told, they look pretty much like any road-crew you see working on the Interstate: mellow, down-home, and semi-wasted.

Southern rockers were building their music from two of the strongest American musical traditions: blues and country & western. From C&W they learned the use of the steel and slide guitars; from blues, they learned how to make old telecaster electric guitars sing and wail. Country music taught them sentiment (sometimes verging on sentimentality) and a longing for rural life. The blues balanced this with its urban realism and frank good humor. Both traditions supplied a strong spirituality that was reinforced by acid mysticism. The southern chauvinism that is upfront in country music and sometimes apparent in the blues combined with a cynical sort of populism to give southern rock its ambivalent political tinge. Few songs are blatantly "revolutionary" or "protest" oriented, but almost all imply a bi-racial class consciousness both of oppression and immense inner strength.

Strange combinations these, and seemingly untenable. Yet through the lean years of the Sixties, the musicians and their constituency synthesized their forebearers' experience and their

Steve Cummings, a native of Florida, is a cultural historian and a member of the staff of the Institute of Southern Studies. A former organizer of migrant farm-workers in Florida, Mr. Cummings now lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where he handles promotional chores for *Southern Exposure*. Photos by Carter Tomassi.

own obscure visions into a music and a sense of community that provided alternatives to the middle-of-the-road drivel and Bold New South bullshit that were infiltrating and destroying the South's identity.

By the time the equipment is set up and instruments are tuned, Town Hall is packed. Most of the audience are UNC students, talking about tomorrow's exam and last week's hashish with equal seriousness. A good many in the crowd are members of what might be called "the new working class"—long-haired construction workers and stoned waitresses, the nearest rock-and-roll equivalent to the honky-tonk crowds of Nashville and the blues devotees of Chicago's South Side. There are even a few glitter freaks, their cheesy decadence looked upon with aloof amusement by most of the crowd. David Bowie has a long way to go down here.

The club owner paces back and forth between the stage and bar, pausing occasionally to speak to an employee or regular customer. He looks like somebody who is very aware of the importance of his job. Approaching the band's sound-man, he asks several questions and apparently gets the right response since he claps the man on the back and moves on. The sound-man looks over at the woman working with him and shakes his head. They both smile.

The fragile, tentative youth communities that sprang up in places like Tallahassee, Virginia Beach, New Orleans, and, of course, Atlanta, all

revolved around the music. These were the days of free concerts in the park, hanging out on the street, and jamming all night. Journalist Hunter Thompson caught that strange exuberant magic when he wrote "In those days you could go in any direction at any hour of the day or night in perfect assurance of running into people just as crazy and twisted as you were." It was a time of such boundless possibilities as seems almost incredible to us now, a scant five years later, but those times were real and the music caught it and pushed us further. The Allman Brothers, already emerging as the leader of the musical movement, opened their second album, *Idlewild South*, with the lines, "People, can you feel it, love is everywhere."

But already there were tensions developing as inner contradictions surfaced and societal pressure intensified. In the community itself the use of hard drugs became a convenient way out of the dreary cycle of police harassment, roach-filled apartments, bad food, and general paranoia that increased as America began to change its view of freaks from harmless oddballs to dangerous menaces. Life's emphasis slowly shifted from a loving celebration to a grim determination to survive. The Allman Brothers' "Midnight Rider" became the Southern freak's anthem.

"I got one more silver dollar. . .
And the road goes on forever.
But I'm not gonna let 'em catch me no,
Not gonna let 'em catch the Midnight Rider."



Wet Willie

A bearded guy in a lumberjack shirt is loudly demanding that the band, which hasn't even tuned up yet, play "Statesboro Blues." When this fails to get a response he sings the opening lines himself. "Wake up, mama, turn your lamp down low!" Everybody ignores him, including his embarrassed woman friend. "Wake up, Mama!" He shouts and slowly slides from his chair to the floor, passed out. As he's more or less dragged to the door, someone murmurs, "I wonder where he scored those downs."

At about the same time, success was finally beginning to dawn for the Allman Brothers. The seemingly endless round of touring was building an audience outside the South, both among promoters (Bill Graham said they were his favorite band) and the public at large. But there was a large price tag attached to national approval of their excellent music. It came in the form of frayed nerves, expensive cocaine habits, and deteriorating personal relationships. Finally, the long road seemed to come to an abrupt end when the premier slide-guitar player and focal point of the band, Duane Allman, was killed in a motorcycle wreck in Macon, Georgia. His death was followed in less than a year by the loss of bassist Berry Oakley in a similar accident only a few blocks from the site of Duane's crash. In a curious way, the low-point of southern freak culture paralleled the near shattering of its most articulate voice.

Both survived. They survived the same way the sharecroppers and the mountaineers had done it: by pulling back to the land and their extended families and holding on to what they needed. The visions of sweeping change and the joys of stardom were gone, but the community and music remained open to growth and development. Out of the increasingly stable, far-flung communities emerged bands that combined the soaring guitar lines and solid rhythms of the Allmans with their own distinctive styles. The Marshall Tucker Band brought their music out of the small club circuit around Spartanburg, South Carolina, and into national prominence with a fine debut album. Wet Willie, Hydra, Mose Jones, and Lynyrd Skynyrd had long been mainstays in Atlanta, polishing and refining their material, until they got their breaks. Cowboy sprang from the central Florida tourist boom towns, getting deserved acclaim as Gregg Allman's back-up band on his solo tour. Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen got their initial recognition in Berkeley and Ann Arbor, but they never forgot that their rockabilly music was as Southern as lead singer Billy C. Farlow's Decatur, Alabama accent.

It became a truism that every milltown and university city had its own fine band, playing its



Berry Oakley and Duane Allman

heart out six nights a week in cramped dance clubs, dodging beer bottles and answering requests for old favorites, all the while dreaming of the day when they would be summoned by Phil Walden or Al Kooper to record their album in Macon or Atlanta.

The band has opened with an original song, then moved into an incredibly driving version of Aretha Franklin's "Chain of Fools." They receive scattered applause which the drummer acknowledges with a "thank you" and a nod. "That first song is gonna be on our album, which we're gonna have to re-cut down in Atlanta soon's we get a chance." He looks tiredly at the bass player and organist, who laugh and light cigarettes. The initial excitement of a recording contract fades after long hours in the studio and the dawning realization that not all the petty rip-offs and two-faced bullshit are confined to local managers and club owners.

Southern musicians are presently receiving their greatest encouragement from Capricorn Records and Al Kooper's Sound of the South. Kooper, a musician who won great acclaim for his mid-sixties work with Mike Bloomfield, Steve Stills, and Bob Dylan, now lives in Atlanta. A veteran of many artist-record company battles himself, he goes out of his way to give the artists on his label both musical freedom and financial stability. Phil Walden, the guiding light of the Allman's label, Capricorn, is also generally known for his dedication to the southern sound. Of course, it is one thing to love the music and quite another to gain it popular acclaim through the devious, brutalizing world of media conglomerates. It's doubtful if anyone can do it successfully and emerge with personal reputation unscathed. Yet there does

seem to be a qualitative difference between the artist's lot at Capricorn or Sounds of the South and the New York or Los Angeles studios.

The band is into an extended jam now, lead singer Steve Ball hunched over his harmonica taking the lead while the bassist rocks back and forth on his heels laying down a solid rhythm. A black couple is doing the Bump, a dance that entails partners, yes, bumping hips, knees, and butts. It's probably what the John Birch Society had in mind when they warned of the menace of Negro dancing. Integrated schooling is, of course, in dire straits. Mixed housing seems light years away. But as the band and the dancers respond to each other's energy, it's plain to see that at least in its music, the South's blacks and whites interact with respect, rather than fear and dislike.

Today, southern rock probably is, as the disgruntled Rolling Stone reader insisted, the most alive popular music being played. It needs neither ghoulish stage props nor a contrived decadence to be appealing. Southern musicians get on stage and give. They finally care little if "outsider" audiences understand. They have learned from vast, varied traditions that have little to do with the taste-maker's analysis of what will be pop music's very next phase. When Janis Joplin is singing or

Richard Betts is picking they are in that timeless region where the past's burdens are freed by the vision of freedom, now and forever. The South has learned from suffering, and through its music, is making a gift of its knowledge. It can be joyfully taken, or, as so many times in the past, rejected. No matter, in the steamy rock clubs and on sunny back porches, the music will go on.

A long night is nearly over. The people who came for sexual conquest have left, as have those who came to display their outré finery. The only ones left are those truly into the music or too drunk to walk. The band is cooking, as they are starting to say again, with gas. The organist is making his church-like chords act as a foundation for the guitarist's leaping screaming notes. Ah, who can describe it? One need only look—the closed eyes and thrown-back heads, hands balled into fists, clutching at the music, never wanting it to stop. Finally it is over, and there comes that brief moment when the band and the audience gaze at each other in total communication. It only lasts a second, but that's all that's needed. The bass man says quietly, "Good night." It's the end of another gig for the Steve Ball Band and they and the audience walk out into the cool air of a pre-dawn North Carolina morning.





photo by Jim Tramel

BASCOM LAMAR LUNSFORD

The Limits Of A Folk Hero

By Bill Finger

The dark ominous clouds burst into a driving thunderstorm. Long lines of people waiting for festival tickets covered themselves as best they could. Waiting for my friends, I found a niche under an old protruding stone ledge and watched the heterogeneous audience of mountaineers and tourists interact under the adversity of the elements. Within this fascinating collage of musicians and audience arriving in the pouring rain, a single car pulled into the no-parking zone in front of the Asheville, North Carolina, civic auditorium and stopped. I watched several people climb out behind their umbrellas. Then a tiny, frail man appeared in an impeccable white suit. Leaning on the arms of two of his brood, Bascom Lamar Lunsford had come to direct the Saturday night finale of the Forty-Sixth Annual Mountain Dance and Folk Festival, held in Asheville on August 4, 1973.

If this had been the first festival in 1928, when Lunsford brought his friends together at Pack Square, the instruments would have been drenched as well as the people, but the dancing would have gone on. From the first small gathering, an appendage of Asheville's Rhododendron Festival, Lunsford had taken his festival from Pack Square to the local ball park and finally to the civic auditorium. In the process, he gained world-

wide acclaim as a collector and preserver of pure mountain music, serving as U.S. representative to the first International Folk Festival in Venice. But the Asheville Mountain Music Festival remained Lunsford's greatest joy, as it did for thousands of his friends and guests.

He looked his ninety-one years as he painfully climbed from the car and negotiated the growing rain puddles. His eyes reflected some fright and confusion as scores of people approached his entourage. Lunsford must have sensed that this would be his last time to call out the numbers, signal for the cloggers, and listen to pure mountain tunes from the fiddles and banjos of friends from Sandy Mush and Ivey Creek, from Weaverville and Swannanoa. One month later, on September 4, 1973, the "Minstrel of the Appalachians" died. The 46th Annual Festival was the last in Asheville's old civic auditorium. A major face-lifting of the auditorium beckoned the Festival to yet another home. The rhythms of the music, the tireless right hand of the banjo picker, and the intricate movements of the cloggers sounded the end of an era.

Bill Finger, a free-lance writer from Chapel Hill, has lived and traveled through the southern mountains since early childhood. He has worked as North Carolina co-ordinator for the AFL-CIO Appalachian Council and is currently on the staff of the Southern Oral History Program of U.N.C.

The Minstrel's Mission

Bascom Lamar Lunsford lived a long and full life. He dabbled and searched for answers, as a school teacher, a lawyer, and a politician, but his real commitment was to mountain people and mountain music. Long before Appalachian studies or **Foxfire** or schools of folklore, Lunsford understood the importance of his history and the heritage of his mountain kinsmen and neighbors. As he said near the end of his life:

the key to whatever success I've had . . . has been in realizing the value of the fine tradition in mountain people. I've spent the night in more cabins between Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, and Iron Mountain, Alabama, than anybody—and I know!¹

A special part of mountain culture for Lunsford was the traditional music that had been handed down through the generations from the earliest Scotch, Irish, British, and German settlers. He had been playing the fiddle and singing traditional tunes since he was eight. Neither an academically trained folklorist, nor a polished recording star, Lunsford simply shared what he knew and did what he loved. He gathered songs, traveled deep into coves to record lost tunes, lectured, recorded, organized festivals, and encouraged fledgling fiddlers.

Lunsford worked at preserving the mountain music in such a variety of ways that he became



Bascom Lamar Lunsford



known as the "Minstrel of the Appalachians." He catalogued tunes and sought out the sources of the music, but he did more than just collect, analyze, and reflect. The music was not to be appreciated merely as a relic of the past but sung, danced, and played as a part of a vibrant living culture. John Parris, the western North Carolina folklorist and a friend of Lunsford's since 1927, recently recalled that "Lunsford kept these people interested in keeping bows rosined and their banjos tuned."²

Lunsford's primary vehicle for keeping the music alive in his native mountains was the Mountain Dance and Folk Festival. Despite the growing influence of radio and commercial music, his Festival transcended first the rise of honky-tonk country music and the power of Nashville's WSM and then the commercialized bluegrass circuit and the power of slick advertising. Neither country and western nor bluegrass, the format and the music remained consistent through the years. Pure mountain music, rooted in the Scotch-Irish ballads and passed down through an oral tradition, was played by local musicians on the traditional instruments—banjo, fiddle, and dulcimer. Guitars, bass fiddles, and mandolins have been added through the years, but electric instruments were unwelcome and modern songs seemed strangely

out of place. Even on Lunsford's final night at the Festival, his influence remained strong as a feeble version of "Dueling Banjos" drew polite applause while the audience greeted "Old Grey Eagle," a traditional tune, with rousing enthusiasm.

Lunsford's work as a folklorist spanned a fifty-year period of complex social change in the Southern Appalachian Highlands. Outsiders were coming into the North Carolina mountains. The National Forest Service, the National Parks, and T.V.A. gained control of huge areas of land; large industries such as Champion Paper Company in Canton (fifteen miles west of Asheville) and the proliferation of small textile mills throughout the Asheville area added the industrial class distinctions of management and labor to the culture. Tourists came to view the gorgeous mountains, spawning an economic dependence on this seasonal trade, and in their wake came corporate developers with ski resorts and golf courses, condominiums and vacation homes. The tiniest mountain coves were invaded by television, anti-poverty workers, and Appalachian Regional Commission bureaucrats. Roads, television, industry, and the tourist trade pushed mountain people into the American mainstream and in the process threatened mountain culture with extinction.

Lunsford was aware of some of these dangers, and revealed his perception of them to John Parris:

It was a time . . . when paved roads, electricity, and outlanders seeking sites for industrial plants were beginning to bring about great changes in the traditional life of the mountains. [As the mountain people adjusted to new ways,] they had even begun to hold the fiddle and the banjo in low esteem as crude, old-fashioned instruments. And the music which their ancestors had played and sung they thought of as a relic of the past. Only the old ones held on to their heritage with any degree of steadiness. The younger generation was growing away from the old music. It was far from dead, but it was slowing dying.³

He responded to the menace of assimilation with what he knew, the music and its impact on mountain people. His fame and legend indicates his success in preserving the traditional mountain music. His value as a "folk hero" was clear in his final Festival as person after person came to the stage to play the traditional tunes. But the threats to mountain society continue to grow stronger and more complex, revealing the limits of Lunsford's approach to cultural survival. To understand these limits, his life must be viewed in the context of the changing political realities in the Appalachian region and especially in western North Carolina.

Growing Up in Changing Times

Lunsford was born in Madison County, North Carolina, one of the most rugged counties in the state. Bordering on Tennessee to the north, Asheville's Buncombe County to the south, and mountainous Yancey and Haywood Counties to the east and west, Madison descends from the 5000-foot elevation of the Bald Mountains to the bottom land where the French Broad River enters the county at the Tennessee border. The county's population has always been small and homogeneous. The census figures reveal two important aspects of its development: the periods of growth and decline, and the racial makeup:

1860	5,908	213 Negro slaves, 17 free Negroes
1890	17,805	710 Negroes
1900	20,644	558 Negroes
1940	22,523	106 Negroes
1960	17,217	110 non-whites
1970	16,003	100 non-whites

Before the Civil War scarcely anyone except the Baptist missionaries and the famous Methodist circuit rider, Francis Asbury, took notice of this tiny population. The isolation of Madison and the paucity of slaves made the county a Union stronghold where Colonel George Washington Kirk led the Second and Third North Carolina Mounted Volunteers of the Union Army. Two factors are responsible for the extraordinary growth from 1860 to 1890: the completion of the Western North Carolina Railroad from Tennessee to Asheville in 1882 and the founding of Mars Hill College, a Baptist-supported school, in 1859. Although warm springs were discovered near the Tennessee border in 1799 and a small hotel had been built, the tourist business grew in Hot Springs only after the completion of the railroad facilitated travel. While Hot Springs attracted regional tourists and some world travelers, Mars Hill nurtured a small pocket of indigenous middle-class educators.

James Bassett Lunsford, an ex-Rebel soldier, a school teacher, and a good judge of a fiddler, came from Texas to a teaching job at Mars Hill College in 1866. In 1870, he married Luarta Leah Buckner, who was a granddaughter of one of the original trustees at Mars Hill College and who knew scores of old mountain songs herself. Bascom Lamar was born on March 21, 1882, in Mars Hill.

Exposed to the diversity of this mountain culture, Bascom and his brother started playing homemade cigar-box fiddles at an early age. They learned mountain tunes at apple peelings, tobacco curings, and house raisings. But Bascom's daddy was not a farmer; he was not tied to the land in the same way as a subsistence farmer of the bottom-

land or cove depends on the soil and the uncertainty of the elements. Bascom was the child of a school teacher, a professional, and he was pushed to be a good student; as part of an indigenous elite, he was also pushed outside the isolation of such a rural county. Yet as John Parris notes, "he never forgot where he came from . . . He never lost his contacts; he grew up with these people."⁵

In 1901 the family sent Bascom to Rutherford College, a preparatory school in Burke County on the eastern side of the mountains. Steeped in the times and life of Madison County, Bascom learned new songs at Rutherford from W.B. Love and Fred Moody. He returned to Madison in 1902 to teach in a county school. But in 1903, young and restless, he took a job with the East Tennessee Nursery Company of Clinton, Tennessee. For two years, Bascom traveled on horseback through the mountains peddling fruit trees. But his journeys became a mission for tunes rather than for seeds. He went from Clinch River west of Knoxville, to Big Stone Gap, Virginia, and from Pilot Mountain, N.C., to Brasstown Bald, Georgia.⁶ As he criss-crossed the mountains, Bascom became a welcome visitor to an isolated family living in a log cabin deep in the mountains. He often traded seedlings for his lodging, a practice not too profitable for the Nursery Company but one that gave Lunsford a chance to visit and find out what old tunes people knew. Banjos and fiddles sometimes appeared, and the family stayed up late into the night sharing songs and making music.

Lunsford was still young and eager for new ventures. After quitting the nursery business, he taught English at Rutherford College for two years and then went into business raising bees. Bascom remembers a particular day, May 28, 1906, when he checked the bees and found the honey as plentiful as he had ever seen it. The story goes that he realized he would have enough money to begin a family, and on June 2, he married Nellie Sarah Triplett, whom he had known since 1887.⁷ As a husband with family responsibilities that eventually grew to six daughters and one son, Lunsford had to make a living. He continued to teach off and on at Rutherford College, got a law degree from Trinity College (now Duke University), owned and edited a weekly paper for two years, was the solicitor of Burke County Recorder's Court and an auctioneer, sold war bonds during World War I, and even chased draft dodgers for the Justice Department in New York City.

In the early 1920's, Lunsford decided to settle down and bought a 140-acre farm on South Turkey Creek outside of Asheville where he built a house with a living room large enough for square dancing. He practiced law and made a modest living.

Dabbling in politics as the campaign manager for Zeb Weaver, Democratic candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives in 1922, and as the reading clerk in the North Carolina House, he was a traditional party Democrat with the limited political vision that such an affiliation represented. But just as his numerous earlier jobs had not satisfied him, the practice of law and politics did not capture his spirit either. Throughout the first two decades of the century, he had maintained his avid interest in mountain music but had never turned to music full-time. Cecil Sharp, the famous British collector, came to North Carolina in 1916 looking for traditional songs, especially for the Irish, Scottish, and British influences. Lunsford, then thirty-four years old and lacking confidence with such a renowned musicologist, decided his time had not yet come.⁸

Becoming a Collector

But Lunsford had grown older. From the stability and economic security of his South Turkey Creek farm, he now had the luxury of channeling his adventurous spirit into discovering the roots of mountain tunes. He began a wide range of musical ventures, drawing on his exposure to the mountain culture and his indefatigable energy. He recorded commercially through the twenties on Brunswick and Okeh labels and knew his contemporaries, Gid Tanner, John Carson, and Samantha Baumgarner, who were also trying their fortune with the budding industry.⁹ He wrote ballads and songs, often with current themes, but always in the traditional style. His most famous tune, "Mountain Dew," described the moonshine business of those Madison County folk untouched by the labors of the Baptist preachers, Christian mission schools and the Methodist circuit riders:

There's an old hollow tree up the way there
from me
Where I lay down a dollar or two
I go away and then, when I come back again
There's some good old mountain dew.

In 1925, Robert W. Gordon, a Harvard-trained folklorist, came seeking mountain songs for the Library of Congress. Bascom had been collecting extensively but needed the encouragement of Gordon. They traveled into the hollows together recording, and Gordon impressed upon Lunsford the importance of serious song collections. In 1929, Lunsford co-authored a small collection of original tunes. **30 and 1 Folk Songs**. And in 1928, he directed the first Mountain Dance and Folk Festi-

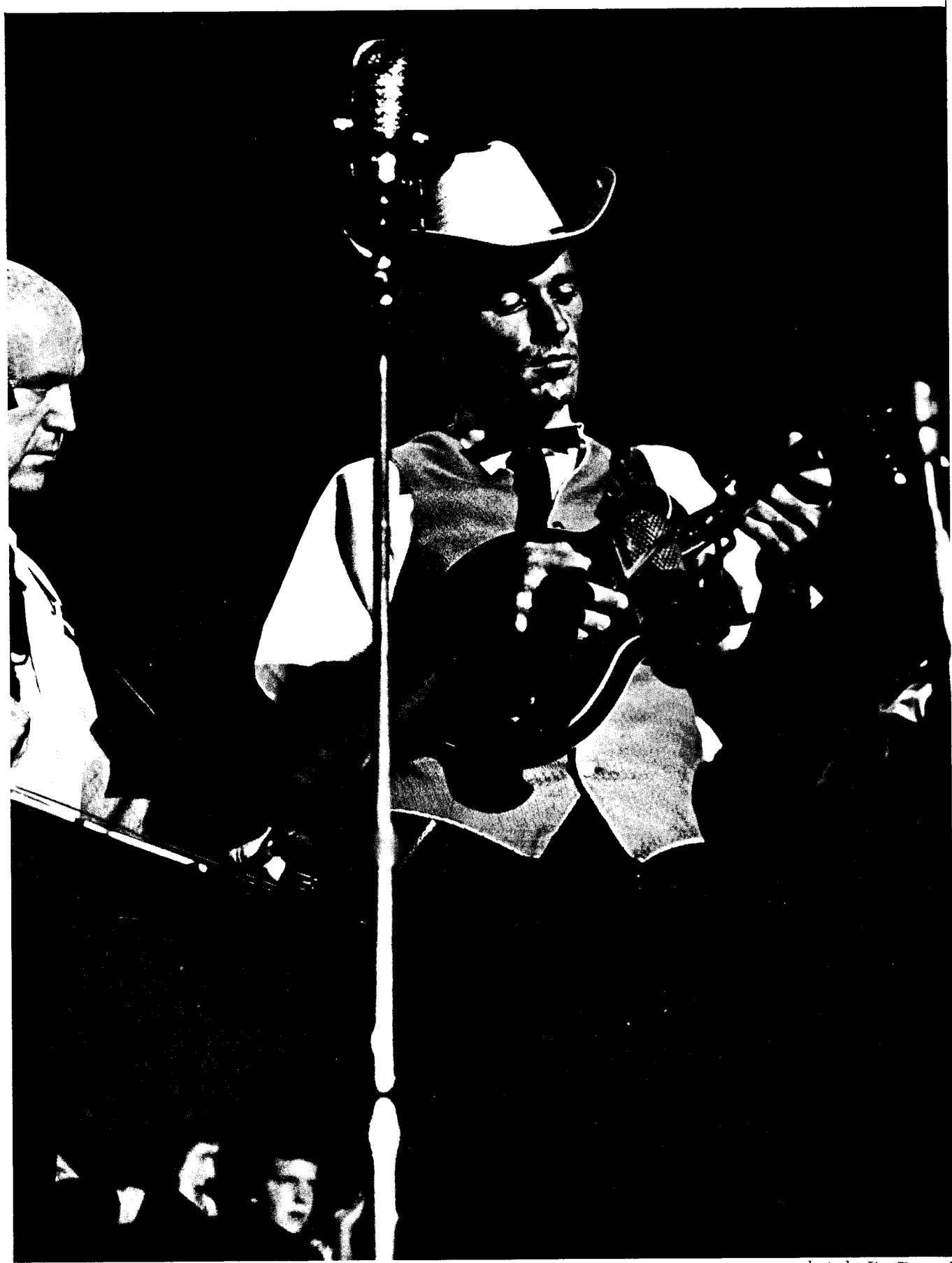


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val in Asheville.

He launched into a new career as a folklorist because "I feared that, as the old folks passed on, they would take with them to their graves all memory of the tunes and lyrics which once the mountain people had sung with such joy and gusto."¹⁰ He moved from being a one-man repository of the old tunes to a maturing professional. He learned folklore methodology and observed precise standards of collection. He still spoke as a folklorist at the end of his life:

... that's the reason I always started the folk festival "along about sundown." Certain expressions like that stick in a person's memory and become strong. I always used that principle of folk tradition in my work.¹¹

Lunsford's pride in mountain music took him from coast-to-coast. He led a delegation to the first National Folk Festival in St. Louis in 1934. He lectured and sang at colleges throughout the country. In 1935, he recorded his personal collection of songs for the Columbia University Library in an astounding display of stamina and memory, and he sang before 16,000 people in New York's Madison Square Garden when the National Folk Festival was held there in 1942.¹²

In 1949 Lunsford made recording history again with a seven-day marathon session for the Library of Congress in Washington, recording over 300 songs. This collection came from a variety of sources. In addition to childhood experiences and travels with the Nursery Company, he learned songs at parlor gatherings around the piano in such places as the sheriff's house in Graham County, and he gave prizes for new songs written in the traditional style or the discovery of old ones when he lectured at schools on traditional music. These recordings are treasured for their authentic mountain diction and include such favorites as "Cindy," "Wish I Was a Mole in the Ground," his own "Mountain Dew," and a unique version of "Jesse James" which he learned in 1903 from Sam Sumner near Bat Cave, North Carolina.¹³ Other collections of Lunsford's songs were made for the Library of Congress by Alan Lomax (1941 Asheville Festival), Frank C. Brown, and Benjamin Botkin.

Perhaps Lunsford's finest hour came in 1939 when he took Sam Queen and his Soco Gap dance team to the White House to perform for the King and Queen of England. Lunsford leaned against the gold piano and picked his banjo while Sam Queen sang out "Walking the King's Highway" to his cloggers. While the King smiled and the Queen patted her foot, Cordell Hull whispered to Lunsford that he could dance any figure they could call.¹⁴

The Asheville Festival

Lunsford became known worldwide for his music and his collections. However, the world of professionals is not the world of Madison County. Lunsford loved the Asheville Folk Festival above all else, and the Festival remains the most revealing and the most symbolic aspect of Lunsford's career and his place in North Carolina folk tradition.

The Festival grew into the Civic Auditorium but did not "outgrow" its purpose. "Forty-six years I've never had a written program, never had a piece of paper in my hand. I know the fellers, knew what they played, knew how well they did it, you see." People never wore cowboy hats or sang country and western music. Most of the performers were local and understood the tradition, but occasionally a young mis-guided initiate would arrive with an electric guitar or some yodeling numbers. Lunsford put them on first and most of the crowd came to realize that the real show did not start until about sundown, after these aberrations had come and gone. When mills came into the area and started sponsoring dance teams, Lunsford insisted that the teams continue to be called by their native region rather than by the name of any mill.

Musicians came mostly from western North Carolina and were not commercially famous. Some were well known to the supporters of the Festival and to those who lived in the area; Lunsford uncovered others and encouraged them to share their talents with the Festival audience. Wanting all of them to perform, Lunsford judiciously shied away from choosing a favorite when asked to name the best fiddle-player he had ever known:

When it comes to the best fiddle-players you have to name Marcus Martin of Swannanoa, Manco Sneed the Cherokee Indian, Dederick Harris from Whittier, Fiddlin Bill Hensley of Madison, Jesse Rogers of Henderson, and Pender Rector of Madison.¹⁶

Most of them made it to the Festival each year, some holding the fiddle against their chest in the traditional style rather than under their chin. Obray Ramsey from Madison, Red Parham from Sandy Mush, and Bill McElreath from Swannanoa were also regulars.

They would play old favorites of the highland fiddlers like "Sourwood Mountain," "Cumberland Gap," and "Old Gray Eagle," and they sang traditional ballads like "Barbara Allen," telling tales that might very well date from their European ancestors. Banjo players would add the driving

rhythm of a mountain frailing or a clawhammer style to the background of the fiddle. The three-finger Scruggs style joined the other methods later so that now a banjo picker might use any of these three styles.

This strong local tradition did not discourage visitors however. They came from every state of the union, many coming year after year. In many ways the crowd at the Festival represented the same diversity of Lunsford's native Madison County. Mountain musicians mixed with these summer tourists and local residents just as tourists frequented Hot Springs and educators built Mars Hill into a thriving college town in the midst of a rural mountainous county.

The Asheville Festival did not become another Union Grove festival, however, where thousands of young people flock to North Carolina's foothills every Easter. Nor did the Festival become overblown as has the Grand Ole Opry, nor highly commercialized as have the burgeoning bluegrass festivals. In many ways, the Asheville Folk Festival stands somewhat apart from any other kind of mountain festival. Its closest kin is the informal music that is made on front porches throughout the region and such small festivals as those in Berea, Kentucky, and at Fiddler's Grove, North Carolina.

Music in Mountain Culture

Lunsford came a long way from his cigar-box fiddle and his school-teacher parents but retained the ambiguities of these Madison County roots. His banjo and buck dancing reflected his lifelong contact with everyday people while his worldwide reputation as a folklorist represented the upward mobility of educated, mountain elites. This ambivalence remained unresolved, however. Lunsford defined his mission and proceeded with his goals, limiting the scope of his work to mountain music. Yet Madison County and the Appalachian region were changing rapidly, needing dynamic leaders as well as static heroes. The long verses of the English ballads lacked the contemporary poignance of protest songs from the textile and paper mills. These ballad tales reflected another era, important to be preserved, certainly, but maintained as a part of an ongoing folk tradition. And the times they were a-changing.

While Lunsford dealt exclusively with the music of the region, complex social forces were affecting the total cultural complexion of Madison County, western North Carolina, and all of Appalachia. The power of the media, the threat of assimilation, and the destructiveness of outside economic and political controls signaled real

dangers. Lunsford's responses to these perils were narrow when viewed within the context of his times.

The people of western North Carolina have traditionally shared the uniqueness of mountain culture with the rest of Appalachia. The Scotch, Irish, British, German, and Dutch settlers moved down the Blue Ridge chain from Pennsylvania and into the mountainous frontiers from the Virginia and North Carolina flatlands. This common heritage reinforced the bonds between these settlers; their struggles were against the elements of nature and the isolation of a frontier. Rooted in the commonality of this western migration, divergent economic and political forces swept into Appalachia, and North Carolina's development took a separate course.

In the late 19th century the discovery of coal precipitated a major transformation of the mountain region. "Bloody Harlan" and Coal Creek symbolize the political struggles that ensued as mountain people reacted to the usurpations of the coal industry in Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia, and southwest Virginia. From the first machinations used to steal people's land, documented by Harry Caudill in **Night Comes to the Cumberlands**, to the most recent strip-mining fights, reported by "Mountain Life and Work" and "People's Appalachia," coal has been the focus of people's anger and dissent.¹⁷ There have been many other struggles within the mountains, of course: abolitionists, unionists, CIO organizing efforts, and the welfare rights movement. However, the pervasive impact of the coal economy has made battles against the coal industry the dominant theme of mountain struggle.

The North Carolina mountains represent a starkly different image both in myth and reality. The myth pictures a placid and serene people unlike their Appalachian neighbors; a new history of western North Carolina opens, "Carolina mountain folk are not 'yesterday's people' nor is night likely to come to them."¹⁸ The reality is a complex history of economic exploitation and proud independence. Political and cultural struggle has lacked the dramatic focus of coal but has been no less crucial. In 1835, the treaty between the Cherokees and the United States legalized the Cherokees' trail of tears to Oklahoma, yet a determined band remained and eventually secured reservation land in 1876 and was incorporated in North Carolina in 1889. Unionists and abolitionists were active in North Carolina although not as strongly as in Tennessee. When the National Forests and Great Smokey Mountain National Park came to the region in 1926, the independent mountaineers challenged the U.S. Government itself, refusing to



photo by Jim Tramel

leave their coves, some of them living out their lives there. The labor struggles of the late twenties and early thirties reached the North Carolina textile mill towns of Gastonia and Marion in 1929, and many people who had come from the mountains to these foothill towns were intensely involved in challenging the most powerful industry of the state. Other labor struggles of the 1940's and 1950's, often with strong interracial cooperation in CIO unions such as the old Fur and Leather Workers, resulted in the most heavily unionized area in this most unorganized state, with the Paperworkers in Brevard and Canton, the Rubberworkers in Waynesville, the Textile Workers in Enka, and the Meatcutters in Asheville.

More recently the Tennessee Valley Authority devised a plan to construct a series of fourteen dams on the headwaters of the scenic French Broad River, with potential flooding of 6,600 acres in Madison, Buncombe, Henderson, and Transylvania counties. The Upper French Broad Defense Association organized against the powerful TVA, using local sentiment in a public hearing in Asheville, the environmental impact statements required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and organized citizen's pressure on political leaders at all levels in the 1972 elections. In late November, 1972, the TVA announced that it was abandoning this \$125 million project.

Without the natural ties to the coal economy

of the rest of the region and without any continuity within its own political struggles, the mountain culture of North Carolina has evolved differently from the rest of Appalachia. Moreover, dynamics continue to pull North Carolina apart from the region. The political struggles, the folk traditions, and the "folk heroes" themselves have come to be viewed as much North Carolinian as Appalachian. The forces presently working against the people of western North Carolina are extremely subtle. The federal government (National Forest, National Park, and TVA) owns an enormous amount of land, eroding the property tax base of the six western-most counties by about 50%—yet at the same time these lands are protected from developers.¹⁹ Interstate 40 ploughs straight through the mountains now, accentuating the mobility of the American middle class, and the tourist economy created by this travel results in low-paying, seasonal jobs, and ecological disasters, as billboards and neon signs obscure the natural beauty of the mountains. Corporate developers search frantically for new sites for chalets, resort hotels, and amusement parks. And utility companies have sighted the less populous mountain region for new projects, including the Blue Ridge power project of the New River, which will flood parts of three counties in North Carolina, and a smaller nuclear plant planned for Madison County.

These forces are at work in Lunsford's native

Madison County. The small population peaked in 1940 and has been declining since. Moreover, a larger percentage of the 16,000 people today commute to the Asheville area for industrial jobs with fewer independent farmers, and especially their children, remaining on the land. The data of the North Carolina Employment Security Commission clearly reveals the employment situation in this rural area:

Percentage of Civilian Work Force Unemployed

Year	Madison Co.	Buncombe Co. (Asheville)	North Carolina
1970	11.1%	3.4%	3.8%
1971	12.7%	3.6%	3.9%
1972	8.7%	2.4%	3.1%

To alleviate this high unemployment, a standard formula reappears in local government and chamber of commerce publications: "One of the prime areas of potential development in western North Carolina as a whole, including Madison County, is the area of recreation and tourism industries."²⁰ Developers are responding to these "invitations" with such ventures as "Wolf Laurel" in the Bald Mountains area of Madison, a project with second-home plots and a luxurious golf course.

For all of its distinctiveness, however, western North Carolina's heritage must remain within the Appalachian region or be assimilated into the growing homogeneity and rootlessness of contemporary American culture. The ethos of the Asheville Folk Festival must find a sense of kinship with labor struggles within the coal regions as well as with the expanded minds and visions of Elliot Wigginton's students in North Georgia and with those who come through the educational workshops of Highland Center in East Tennessee. Folklorists and political activists throughout the mountains cannot afford to view one another with parochial disdain or to dismiss each other as irrelevant. The corporate enemies are too sophisticated to be fought alone. They are controlling policy makers of television networks who encourage the proliferation of the destructive stereotypes of Green Acres and Beverly Hillbillies;²¹ they are board members of New York holding firms controlling strip-mining decisions in Washington, in Frankfort, and in Charleston; and they are wealthy financiers looking beyond Miami Beach and the Colorado ski resorts to such land grabs as the 1973 Mead Purchase of 35,000 acres in Jackson County, North Carolina.

The limits of Bascom Lamar Lunsford as a folk hero become clear in this cultural and political context. His was not a voice of political struggle; he did not involve himself in the labor struggles of the

thirties or forties, nor did he often speak out against the potential dangers of land development. In fact, he disapproved of the political music of great balladeers like Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger.²² Lunsford lived with integrity and purpose; he nurtured the natural bonds that an indigenous musical tradition creates between people. But his personal history, his times, and his narrow concern for music limited his perception of the complex forces eroding the social base of the very culture he wished to preserve.

Good-byes

The Forty-Sixth Annual Mountain Dance and Folk Festival was drawing to a close. The interaction of musicians and audience, local folk and visitors, had continued throughout the evening—from the rain-soaked ticket lines to the final goodnights. The hours had been full with fiddle tunes and ballads, string bands and clog teams, tributes for those who had passed away, and anticipations of what was to come with youngsters performing as well as any of the oldtimers. Lunsford introduced several opening numbers but quickly retired to a seat on the edge of the stage and turned the proceedings over to his son, Lamar.

The casual mingling on the stage of musicians, square dancers, and friends extended into the audience as the evening progressed. After the winners had been announced and people had started to leave, these interactions culminated with a community buck dance on the performing platform in front of the stage. The Festival seemed complete: distance between performers and the listeners diminished as people throughout the auditorium participated in this final number, skilled and unskilled clogger alike.

The music was over and the crowd dispersed. As we drove north to Madison County, the downpour had calmed to a drizzle, and the darkness of the night lightened the impact of Asheville's urban sprawl. When we reached our camping spot in a cove in Little Sandy Mush, the early morning dew had added a freshness to the mist of the lingering storm, and the ring of the banjos was still with me.

The morning clearly revealed Asheville's sprawl, however, and the ambiguities of the music's impact on mountain culture weighed on me. We stopped in one of the numerous roadside groceries before returning home. This hiatus allowed for one more moment as an insider: I recognized the caller for the winning clog team and offered several suggestions. We shared some subtle steps on the concrete floor; he marveled at such skills,



photo by Jim Tramel

having seen our license plate. I wished for the precision of the old Hendersonville clog team, and he promised to do better. As we headed for Interstate 40, the monolithic link between Sandy Mush and the outside, I wondered about his role in the mountains—and mine.

The limitations of Lunsford as a folk hero remain with all of us, those who can clog and those who cannot, for a new section of I-40 just opened and western North Carolina land has become some of the most sought-after resort and development real estate east of the Mississippi River. We must move beyond these limitations, insider and outsider alike. We must work to create a more substantial cultural unity between the complex political struggles of the mountains and the subtle values of folk tradition. For the dichotomies that have often separated these two traditions can move forward with the power to preserve and the power to change.

Footnotes

1. Bob Terrell, *Asheville Citizen*, September 5, 1973.
2. Author's interview with John Parris, March 25, 1974.
3. John Parris, *Asheville Citizen*, July 26, 1965.
4. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce.
5. John Parris interview.
6. Harold Martin, *Saturday Evening Post*, May 22, 1948.
7. Author's interview with Loyal Jones of Berea College, April 2, 1974. Mr. Jones has been chosen by the family to be Lunsford's biographer.
8. Manly Wade Wellman, *Kingdom of Madison*, Chapel Hill: U.N.C. Press, 1973, p. 142.
9. Ann Beard, *The Personal Folksong Collection of Bascom Lamar Lunsford*, M.A. thesis, Miami University, 1959.
10. Obituary, *Asheville Citizen*, September 5, 1973.
11. Terrell, *Asheville Citizen*.
12. Beard and Obituary.
13. "Bascom Lamar Lunsford," introduction to his recording, *Archive of Folk Song*, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
14. Beard, *op. cit.*
15. Obituary, *op. cit.*
16. John Parris, *Asheville Citizen*, March 24, 1974.
17. For more information on the historical and current impact of the coal industry on mountain culture see *Southern Exposure*, Vol. I, No. 2, and No. 3-4, and David Whisnant, "The Folk Hero in Appalachian Struggle History, New South, Vol. XXVIII, No. 4.
18. Cratis Williams, introduction to I.W. and John J. Van Noppen, *Western North Carolina Since the Civil War*, Boone, N.C.: Appalachian Consortium Press, 1973, p. x.
19. Author's interview with Charles Taylor, financial investor for Brevard, North Carolina.
20. *County Facilities Plan*, North Carolina Department of Local Affairs, 1971, p. 6, and numerous other similar publications, such as: *Environmental Survey and Plan*, N.C. Division of Community Services, 1972; *Land Development Plan for Madison County*, Dept. of Local Affairs, 1970; *Overall Economic Development Program for Madison County*, Western North Carolina Regional Planning Board, 1961.
21. David Whisnant develops this theme as a part of his multi-media presentation of folk and political heroes in Appalachia.
22. Loyal Jones interview.



photo by Tom Coffin



Photo by Jesse Winch

THE LADYSTREETSSINGER

by Bernice Reagon

At the age of sixty-six, Flora Molton still takes her life to the people each morning as she walks to 7th and G Streets in downtown Washington to begin a day of street singing and preaching the Word. Despite a long life marked by one rejection after another, made all the more difficult by her partial blindness from birth, Flora Molton has not abandoned her love for music and the Bible. In fact, she has combined her talent and faith in a musical form of remarkable strength and gentleness, a form that bridges the often artificial gulf between blues and gospel. The abuse of her years can be heard in the wail of her guitar, or in the words of her songs, or perhaps most clearly in her adopted symbol of "the rejected stone." Drawing on the Biblical image of the stone "the builders refused" which later became a corner stone, Mrs. Molton expresses her lonesome, yet hopeful, feelings in a recent composition:

THE REJECTED STONE

Rolling along, singing a song
Ain't gon' do nobody no harm
I'm just rolling along

If you have a vacant place
I'm always ready to fill a vacant space
I'm just rolling along
This old rejected stone
Just rolling along

Please don't throw this old stone away
You may need this stone someday
I'm just rolling along
Just singing my song

This is one thing I've always been told
Never give up till you reach your goal
I'm just rolling along

I'm gonna roll ain't gon' stop
Keep on rolling till I reach the top
I'm just rolling along.

I.

Life for Flora Molton has been a constant uphill fight. The obstacles began at an early age due to the limitations posed by her impaired vision. When she entered school at age seven, she was labeled a failure: *"I always believed that I could read large print, but the teacher never—she always thought I couldn't. So, she taught me by memory—tables, readings, letters."* At age eight, Flora was taken to Charlottesville, Virginia, to remove the cataracts from her eyes and be fitted for special glasses. The operation improved her vision slightly, but her condition remained grave. Determined to read, Flora continued trying well into her teens until she finally mastered the skill:

I could see the large print, you know the books had large print, then. But, as they say I couldn't, it made me kind of feel that I couldn't and these late days I started reading the large print in the Bible, and that was the first time I really realized I could read.

The Bible was always close at hand in her family's household, and it naturally became her favorite book. Her father pastored several Baptist churches in West Virginia, while her mother, an organist, assumed full responsibility for raising Flora and her brother in Virginia, only occasionally returning to her husband in West Virginia. When she was seven, Flora was baptised despite her mother's objection that she was too young. At seventeen, Flora began preaching and in a few more years she joined the Holiness Church and held mission services in her own home.

But there was no money in this ministry, and when she began seeking work, the stigma of marginal sight again plagued her. Moving to Washington, D.C., in the late 1930's, she was forced "to take to the street" to support a daughter and son—classified by the government as blind, she was considered "unfit" for employment. Throughout the Depression and World War II, she drew on her religious convictions for song material and, despite hostile police, managed to survive off the meager offerings placed in her tin cup:

Well, I'm going to tell you, in the early part, long time ago, when I first started, they gave me fits. I would come back home and I would pray and cry and go back the next day and I'd say, "I ain't done no harm." The gentlemen policemen, some of them were very nasty, they talk so nasty. . . .

During the 1950's, Mrs. Molton made several efforts to get a job that would allow her to come "off the street." She did the rounds of the social agencies: *You want to talk about that? Trouble. That's all I have had. That's the cause of making*

me go out in the street." At the Lighthouse for the Blind, Mrs. Molton was placed in a six-week training program that promised a job at its completion. When it ended, there was no job, "and nobody asked me how I was going to eat." At Goodwill, she was given a substitute job that terminated when the worker returned. Nor could she get into the program that trained workers for the vendor stalls manned by the handicapped:

You see, I got so many promises. I just got disgusted. I just took the street for mine. . . . but work, no. If it hadn't been for the street, I would have been dead. . . . I tried hard. I sat down and said, "I wish some good Samaritan would come by and would hear me or something."

That day did not occur until sometime in 1963 when Ed Morris, a white guitarist, listened to her and began to understand her form of expression. He arranged for her to give a performance for the first time, in a coffee shop. In recent years, Mrs. Molton has appeared in a number of concerts and on the tour of the Southern Folk Festival. To give her music wider exposure, she saved four hundred dollars to have a record made of two of her songs. She hasn't heard them on the radio yet, but she is not discouraged. Indeed, the reasons she gives for writing one of these songs, "Sun Gonna Shine in Vietnam One Day," reveals the quality of her courage and faith:

Well, I had started singing a song that was pleading for the boys in Vietnam, and then I began to think. I say, "Well, they soon going to be coming home." And you know I'm the kind of person that if I believe anything, I have strong faith and that's been about two or three years ago, and so I wrote this song about the "Sun Gonna Shine in Vietnam One Day." And I cometh to singing and I see this year it's coming to pass. I still sing it and I say, "Well, it's good to have faith."

Special appearances and recordings come and go, but they have not yet allowed Mrs. Molton to abandon her street singing and the mixed reactions of her downtown audience:

These days, they policemen are doing better—now, if there are too many people up there selling, they'll say, "Well, all of you are going to have to move." But when everybody else leaves, they let me go back. . . .

Bernice Reagon, singer, lecturer, is currently working towards her Ph.D. in Oral History at Howard University. This article was compiled with the editorial assistance of Lyn Brown, a staff member of the Black Coalition on Higher Education in Atlanta.

I hear so many remarks. I tell people the truth. They won't hear me. If they say, "Are you blind," I say, "partial." Then I hear some of them say, "She ain't blind." I turn around and tell them, "Look lady," they may not even be talking to me, but I say, "If you had asked me I would tell you the truth. I haven't told you I was blind." They never say a word, but I have heard them; some of them will watch me if I go into a store. Look like I am not supposed to do anything I want to do. I wonder why they watch me. I never told them I was blind.

II.

Undaunted, Flora Molton continues to compose and sing, expressing through her music her special loneliness and dignity. During the 1940's, she concentrated on developing guitar techniques which would create a sound representing the sum total of her feelings. She learned the open "D" or Vastepol tuning pioneered in the 1920's by blues guitarists. Her own style requires the use of a piece of steel or a metal ring to fret the strings. A wailing, whining and screaming tone results when she slides the metal on the neck of the guitar. Mrs. Molton fingers with the steel in such a way that a warbled tone is manifested. Dissonance is accomplished by her grouping the sevenths and thirds together. She also fingers three strings at a time; but if the sound of a train is desired, she fingers four strings at a time. The combination of techniques produces a chordal wail with a buzz effect, a quality present in traditional African music.

Flora Molton refers to her music as "a lonesome, mournful sound," but she calls it a "country" sound rather than the blues. The distinction is important because blues have long been considered "secular" music by the devoutly religious. As a singer of religious songs, Mrs. Molton is quick to point out she has not sung blues since she "left the world," or became sanctified. In traditional gospel music, the blues sound is obscured behind the hymnal form; but in Mrs. Molton's music, there is no trace of a hymnal structure. It is in fact the same sound by which blues is most easily identified. yet Flora Molton states that her music expresses its message through herself; her song/sermons come from her experience, and while not accepting the blues, she recognizes that her message requires a lonesome sound.

To Mrs. Molton, the distinction of tunes between blues and gospel is not as important as determining whether the lyrics are secular or sacred. Her own songs have two types of lyrics: those expressing a specific spiritual belief and

those telling a story from her personal experience. She frequently uses the blues musical form, but a second style is more akin to a musical/religious drama. In "The Little Country Town Where I Was Born," Mrs. Molton recounts her conversion experience by employing the black minister's chanting style and a rhythmic structure that is chained to a tonal progression. The combined effect is reminiscent of the African storyteller with group response:

I remember it was one Sunday morning—
Ah—my mother, she hooked up the horse and buggy
And she carried me to church.
Started on down—
Lord, down the old dusty road.

They sang this:

None but the righteous
None but the righteous
None but the righteous
Shall see God.

Alright—as we got to the church, ooh—
I was so young.
But something moved—moved on me that morning
And it never moved on me before.

Ah—I began to set down in the church
(this is the truth)
Ah—God knows I began to cry.

Lord I cried, Lord I cried
After while I saw my old uncle come marching down
Ah—want to know what is the matter with Flora?

My Mother said, "she wants to join the church,
She's too young, oh—
She don't know what she's doing."

I heard my uncle say, "Oh—let her go—
You don't know when she goin' die.

I want to tell you something—
God deals with little children.

I was only seven years old—
I cried—my uncle took me by the hand.
Lord he led me to the preacher.

I remember one thing he said—
He said, "daughter—daughter—do you believe?"
I said, "yes—"
I began to shake hands.

And they begin to sing a soul song:

Halleluh, yes, tis done
I believe on the son
I am saved by his blood
Of the true sanctified one.

That's what happened in little country town—
Lord, where I was born.

Oh Lord—I never will forget that day.
I went down to the water,
They didn't have to tell me anything
I closed—closed—my eyes
I held my breath and I fold my little arms.
I went on down in the water

Look like I can hear that song:

Take me to the water
Take me to the water
Take me to the water
To be baptized.

That's what happened in the little country town—
Lord, where I was born.

This form upholds my contention that music is
a step above conversational speech in the black

communication system. This idea was first brought
to my attention by Dr. Fela Sowanda who defined
music as “communicative sound in its most power-
ful form.” Flora Molton is a musician who brings
into question all efforts to categorize black music
by correlating musical forms with social cate-
gories. These classifications were built by a
Western church which felt all means must be
taken to separate and easily identify the “sinner”
and the “saved.”

Historically, the reclamation process that has
allowed black people to “testify” musically, in
truth, has involved taking sounds the church
labeled worldly, redefining them as Black, and
bringing them back to the church. With Flora
Molton, we have a musician who says and sings, I
am a Christian, a Holiness minister, mother,
woman; I need and use all the sounds the black
man has created, indiscriminately, to tell the truth.

*“... the stone which the builders disavowed,
the same is made the head of the corner.” 1 Peter 2:6*



Photo by Jesse Winch

A tale of a song “THE LOWELL FACTORY GIRL”

by Francis Tamburro

- 1) When I set out for Lowell,
Some factory for to find,
I left my native country,
And all my friends behind.

Refrain:

Hit-re-i-re-a-re-o
Hit-re-i-re-a.

- 2) But now I am in Lowell,
And summon'd by the bell,
I think less of the factory
Than of my native dell.
- 3) The factory bell begins to ring,
And we must all obey,
And to our old employment go
Or else be turned away.
- 4) Come all ye weary factory girls,
I'll have you understand,
I'm going to leave the factory
And return to my native land.
- 5) No more I'll lay my bonnet on
And hasten to the mill
While all the girls are working hard,
Here I'll be lying still.
- 6) No more I'll lay my bobbins up,
No more I'll take them down;
No more I'll clean my dirty work,
For I'm going out of town.
- 7) No more I'll take my piece of soap,
No more I'll go to wash,
No more my overseer shall say,
“Your frames are stopped to doff.”
- 8) Come all you little doffers
That work in the Spinning room;
Go wash your face and comb your hair,
Prepare to leave the room.
- 9) No more I'll oil my picker rods,
No more I'll brush my loom,
No more I'll scour my dirty floor
All in the Weaving room.

- 10) No more I'll draw these threads
All through the harness eye;
No more I'll say to overseer,
Oh! dear me, I shall die.

- 11) No more I'll get my overseer
To come and fix my loom,
No more I'll say to my overseer
Can't I stay out 'till noon?

- 12) Then since they've cut my wages down
To nine shillings per week,
If I cannot better wages make,
Some other place I'll seek.

- 13) No more he'll find me reading,
No more he'll see me sew,
No more he'll come to me and say
“Such works I can't allow.”

- 14) I do not like my overseer,
I do not mean to stay,
I mean to hire a Depot-boy
To carry me away.

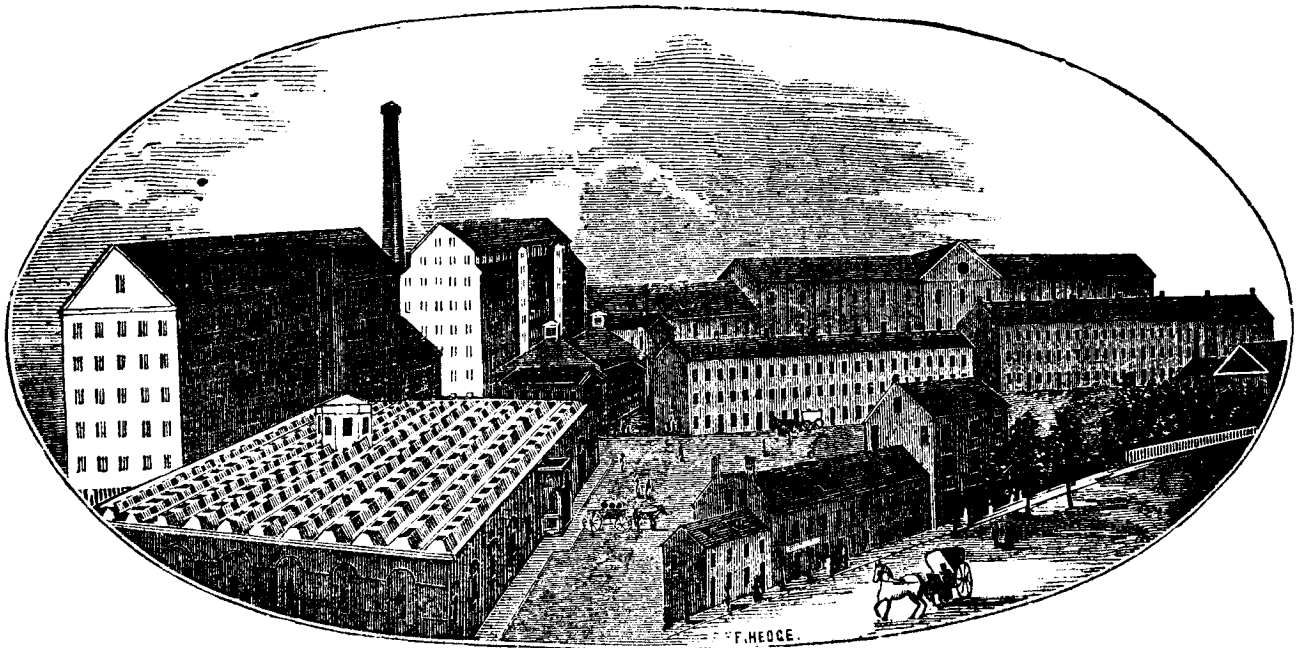
- 15) The Dress-room girls, they needn't think
Because they higher go,
That they are better than the girls
That work in the rooms below.

- 16) The overseers they need not think,
Because they higher stand;
That they are better than the girls
That work at their command.

- 17) 'Tis wonder how the men
Can such machinery make,
A thousand wheels together roll
Without the least mistake.

- 18) Now soon you'll see me married
To a handsome little man.
'Tis then I'll say to you factory girls,
Come and see me when you can.

*A broadside in the Harris collection at Brown University
and probably composed in the late 1830's or early
1840's. See John Greenway, American Folksongs, pp.16f.*



LOWELL CO. MILLS.

Textile Mill, Lowell Massachusetts, circa 1840.

"The Lowell Factory Girl" was a broadside ballad circulated in Lowell, Massachusetts, during the early 1840's. From this center of the New England textile industry, the song entered oral tradition, and the next known version appeared in Maine in 1875. By 1899, it was popular enough among mill workers in Darlington, South Carolina, that when eight-year-old Nancy Dixon started work as a spinner for eight cents a day in the Darlington mills, she learned the song from the older spinning girls. In 1913, folklorist John Lomax collected a version of the factory girl's song from "a wandering singer plying her trade by the roadside in Fort Worth, during an annual meeting of the Texas Cattle Ranchers' Association." She had learned it some time earlier in Florida. Later, during the 1940's, the People's Song Library included in one of their songbooks a version said to have been collected from North Carolina. The different versions of this broadside—under the various titles of "The Factory Girl's Come-All-Ye," "Factory Girl," "No More Shall I Work in the Factory," or with no title at all—are folksongs according to the strictest definition of that term. They compose the textual family of the oldest textile folksong yet collected. It began in nineteenth century Lowell, Massachusetts, and was most recently collected in East Rockingham, North Carolina, in 1962—a song one hundred and twenty years in tradition.

The factory girl's song has had a long life and covered a wide geographic area, like the textile

industry itself, spreading first in the North and then across the South. Other than its aesthetic appeal, why this longevity and widespread popularity? What changes occurred in the song, and what do the different versions reflect about the mill workers' attitude toward their lives in a period of rapid industrialization?

It was with the rise of the textile industry that the United States most consciously and strongly felt the impact of industrialization. The economic success of the New England mills spurred the argument between Jeffersonianism and Jacksonianism—a tension which continues to exist in the myths and literature of America. Both in the North and in the South, the strains on a culture moving from a primarily agrarian to an industrial society were great. In pre-industrial America, so much had been determined or affected by the cycles of nature: the length of the workday and pace of the work; the type of labor which needed to be done; the availability of both capital and work force; even the foods and commodities on a store's shelves. Juxtapose this way of life with the demands of the modern factory system: the discipline and strict regulation of hours; confinement in an artificially-lighted building where the air is humid

Frances Tamburro, currently studying for a master's degree in folklore at the University of North Carolina, presented an earlier version of this paper at the American Folklore Society. She attributes her interest in the lives of mill workers to her parents, both of whom are active in the United Rubber Workers.

to keep strands of threads from breaking, and filled with lint from the many looms; the high noise level; the incidence of fathers, either out of work or as part-time day laborers, carrying lunch to their children in the mills.

The South has few available sources of information on the workers' reactions to these changes. The largest body of literature is the Federal Writers Project held in the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina. These life histories were collected during the 1930's in the form of interviews. In contrast, the songs of mill workers are testimonies free from the added influence of an interviewer's interests, attitudes and intent. Broadside, lyrical and humorous songs, blues, "zipper" and "agit-prop" songs,¹ songs one hundred and twenty years in oral tradition and new compositions—all have come out of the mill workers' experience.

By examining these songs, perhaps we can more clearly understand the historical milieu in which they developed and the attitudes of the singers toward the lives they were leading as workers in a factory. This essay looks at a particular family of one song, noting the changes a text undergoes through oral tradition and placing the song in its historical context. Whether this broadside ballad was sung in the new industrial community of Lowell or the paternalistic mill villages of the South, the feeling it expresses is not one of easy contentment with life as a mill worker.

I.

Quite possibly "The Lowell Factory Girl" evolved from an earlier broadside from the British Isles. "A-Begging We Shall Go" is just one example from there where a text begins with "When I set out from/for" The lack of a tune reference, however, has made it difficult to trace back the song.²

The problem of origin is related to dating the song's composition here in America. John Greenway suggests that:

the aged condition of the broadside, together with such internal evidence as can be detected, place its composition around the 1830's. The 'nine shilling' wage of which the singer complains coincides with the average weekly earnings of \$2.25 paid to New England cotton-factory operatives in 1830. Furthermore, the freedom to return to the farm was not generally possible after 1840 . . . [This was due to the depression of 1837] which wiped out many of the small New England farmers.³

There is a danger in relying too heavily on wages to ascertain a date for the song. Company paybooks giving actual, rather than average, wage rates are not available. Mill girls, foreign visitors and town leaders all give different estimates depending on their experience and point of view.⁴ Many accounts do not state whether or not the price of board is included. Moreover, earnings varied according to job, piece rate, overtime work and familiarity with machines. As a specific wage, therefore, \$2.25 per week could have been earned not only in the thirties but through the mid-forties as well. In fact, Hannah Josephson in her study of Lowell, *The Golden Threads*, states that "over a period of about forty years . . . the average wage never fell much below or rose much above \$2 a week beyond board."⁵

The reference to a wage cut in Stanza 12—*Then since they've cut my wages down/ To nine shillings per week*—is not conclusive either. When improvements were made on the machines, or whenever the machines were speeded up to increase production, wages were adjusted lower per piece to maintain relatively the same earnings.⁶ There were also three major "turn-outs" or strikes following wage reductions during this period—1834, 1836, 1842.⁷ The depression, which began in 1837, and the increasing "competition of cheap agricultural products from the West" did wipe out many New England farmers.⁸ Indeed, we are in possession of accounts that tell of girls returning home during the late 1830's when the mills slowed down.⁹ However, the evidence of the *Lowell Offering*¹⁰ a journal written by the mill girls which eventually became looked upon as a company mouthpiece—should be noted. Published during the early 1840's, the writing does indicate much worker mobility.

Moreover, it is questionable whether "native country," as Greenway suggests, can simply be interpreted as referring to an agricultural community perhaps eighty miles or so away. To begin with, the reference to wages in shilling is unusual. The dollar had been established as legal tender in 1792, and Lowell only paid its workers in American currency. The repeated use of "native"—*native country, native dell, return to my native land*—as well as the reference to shillings should arouse our curiosity. When combined with the realization that beginning in the 1840's a growing immigrant work force was drawn from Canada and the British Isles, especially Ireland, an alternative explanation suggests itself: the narrator had not been in Lowell long enough to think of money in any other terms but that of her native land, yet had lived there long enough to desire escape from the mill and return to her homeland.

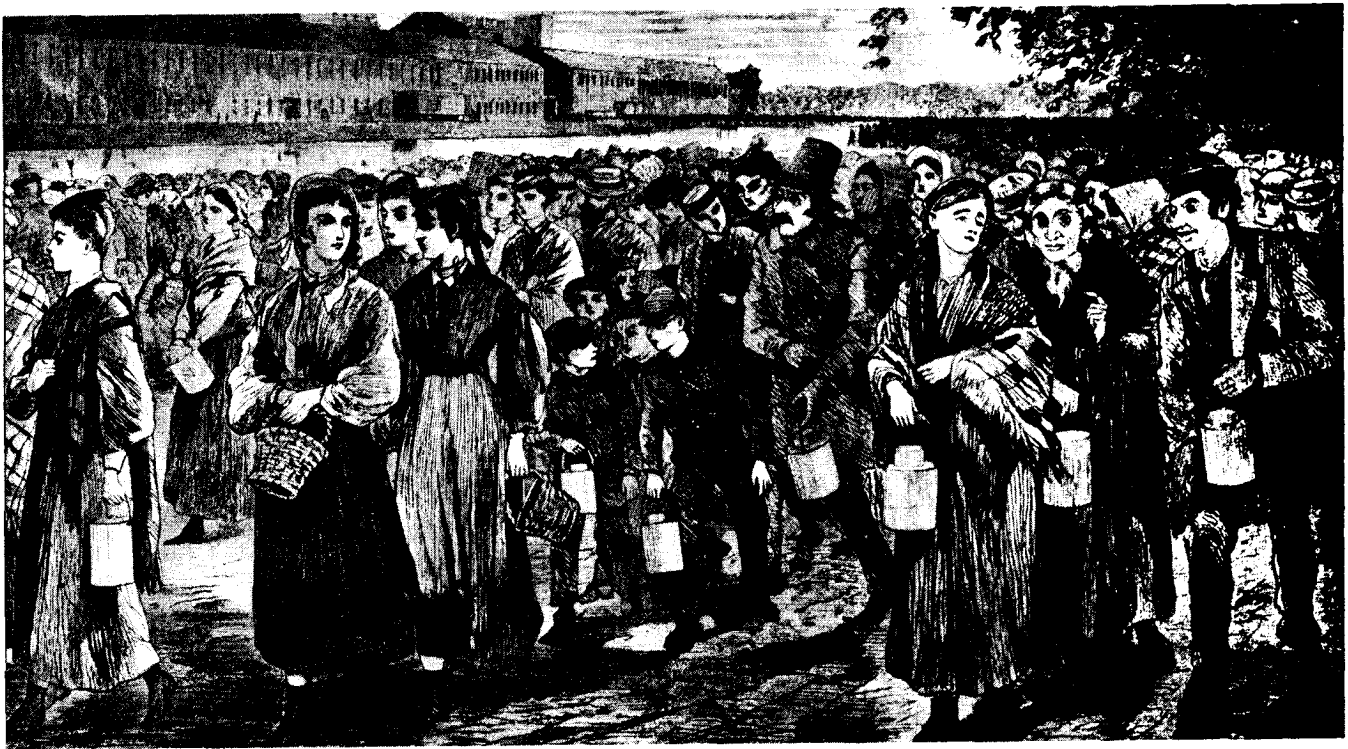
II.

"The Lowell Factory Girl" shares most of the typical characteristics ascribed to American broadsides. The syntax is often awkward and stilted; the idiom is replete with sentimental cliché. As a narrative, it lacks dramatic focus on a single event and appears to lack any order. Two striking qualities of the song, however, are its subjectivity and its detailed description.

The use of the first-person narrator does not imply a particular individual, but rather a class or a group who shares a common background, situation and desire: the factory operatives¹¹ of Lowell who made this song their own. These young girls, mostly unmarried and ranging in age from the late teens to mid-twenties, came from the rural areas of Massachusetts and the surrounding northern New England states—Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. They were primarily of English-Scottish-Irish background, descendants of the early settlers of America. Many were daughters of farmers, teachers, small shopkeepers, and most ventured to the new industrial community lured by the promise of high wages. (The two main fields of employment for women at that time were teaching and domestic service neither of which paid very well.) A girl would work for three or four years to save money for a dowry, send a brother to

college, or help pay the mortgage on a family farm, and then return home or perhaps go on to higher education herself. They were a transient work force. During the late 1830's, recently emigrated Irish made up a small percentage of the mill workers. They too came predominantly from small farming communities and were unfamiliar with the strict discipline demanded by industrial labor. From the 1840's on, the percentage of Irish workers increased until eventually they, with their families, composed the majority of the work force. Thus, the transient nature of the workers decreased, to be replaced by a permanent factory population during the 1850's.

The detailed description of work and machinery in the song—a cacophony of bobbins, bells, picker rods and looms—creates a very real introduction to textile life. This persistent use of seemingly chaotic detail, however, is artfully controlled and arranged in three or four patterns which develop through the song. The most obvious is an outer structure based on a linear development of time. The first stanza recalls the past—the girl has left her *native country* and all her friends behind. The last stanza calls up the future, when she will be happily married to a *handsome little man* and no longer work in the mill. There is a second movement of time—that of the workday. The bell rings and she hastens to work. This is not



completed by describing the end of the workday, but rather in choosing the framework of escape through daydreams of the future.

There is also a spatial movement through the different departments in the mill which progresses from the lower floors of the factory to the higher. Simultaneously, the orderly production of yarn into cloth is depicted. Stanza 6 starts in the spinning room with the winding of bobbins of yarn, and Stanza 8 refers to the *doffers* who replaced the full bobbins of yarn with empty ones. The yarn then goes to the weaving room (Stanza 9, 10, 11 in particular) and then to the *dressing* room (Stanza 15) where the woven material is *finished* in preparation for sale. Not surprisingly, therefore, one finds that the spinning, weaving and dressing rooms occupied respectively the third, fourth and fifth floors of a typical Lowell mill.¹²

The last development traces the hierarchy of status among the workers: from lowly young *doffers*, a job often worked by children and newly arrived girls unfamiliar with power looms and machinery; through the weaver, a position traditionally respected; to the overseer, who represents management. Fittingly, the song ends with the factory girl's ideal vision: that of being married and out of the mill altogether.

The song tells of the loss the young girl senses upon leaving her somewhat pastoral community for the factories of Lowell, a loss of independence and status. She is adamant about refusing to remain subservient to oppressive working conditions and wages. However, the only solutions she sees are escapist: to return home, find a different job, or get married. There is a suggestion of a possible concerted effort toward a walkout (Stanza 8) when she calls to the *doffers* to wash their faces and leave the room, but the solution most strongly emphasized is that of marriage. No exotic Gypsy Davy is going to come along for her; rather, she will hire a depot-boy to carry her away, and will settle down with a "handsome little man."

The loss of independence and status is most strongly emphasized in the song by reference to the mill bells, the overseer and the image of the well-ordered machine.¹³ The factory bell was one of the strongest symbols of the company's regulation of the girl's lives. Their 12½ hour workday¹⁴ was segmented by its ringing. At 4:30 or 5:00 A.M., depending on the season, the bell would wake them; an hour later it would signal the beginning of the workday. It would toll the girls out to breakfast and back, out and in for dinner, and twice more: to close the workday and call for curfew. As one mill girl wrote in a story:

Up before day, at the clang of the bell—and out of the mill by the clang of the bell—into the mill, and at work, in obedience to the ding-dong of a bell—just as though we were so many living machines.¹⁵

As Stanza 3 states, if they failed to leave at the first ringing, the girls were apt to be turned away. For two sets of gates were coordinated with the bells: yard gates which were kept open for only ten minutes before work began, and the mill gates which were hoisted two minutes before work was to begin.¹⁶

A number of accounts state that it was the personality of the individual overseer who could make the workday acceptable or difficult. "In the early years at the boarding-house mills, the overseers were not required to drive the operatives at their work."¹⁷ Many of the jobs allowed the worker much slack time, and although there were rules against reading and sewing during such time, not all overseers applied them equally. Accounts tell of the young *doffers* who would gather in a corner on wintry afternoons and while away the time between bobbin changes singing old ballads like "Barbara Allen," "Lord Lowell," "Captain Kidd," or "Hull's Victory."¹⁸ "Outside of working hours, at church or elsewhere in the town, overseers and operatives frequently met on terms of equality."¹⁹ One historian describes this period as

the happy days when life was homogenous, and all were one in their loyalty to the new mill town on the Merrimack, when the Yankee girls worked leisurely thirteen hours a day in the mills and wrote poetry at night, when everybody went to Church on Sunday, and worshipped God in a common tongue.²⁰

Gradually the speed increased and the number of machines to be tended was multiplied. It was the overseer who became responsible for the success of the speedup. Inevitably, relations worsened; the overseers became more authoritarian. The girl's image of themselves as disciplined cogs in a machine, lacking dignity and a sense of control over their lives, grew stronger. Eventually, the paternalism of the Lowell system was viewed as a form of unacceptable despotism. The noble experiment by the Boston merchant-capitalists which had received world-wide acclaim in the early Jackson years became, in the mid-1840's, the setting of a raising operatives' revolt. The founders of Lowell had established a community in which workers' lives were controlled and regulated not only during work hours but also in the little time available outside the mill.

III.

The land selected for the mill was in the town of Chelmsford, Massachusetts, a sparsely settled region on the Merrimack River. The first company began production in 1825. The mill area was incorporated as a separate town in 1826, and named after Francis Lowell who had perfected the power loom and had been the first to establish a system whereby the conversion from cotton to cloth could be accomplished in one building.²¹ By 1840, there were nine textile mills in "The City of Spindles" employing 6,320 women.²²

One of the founders, Nathan Appleton, reflected the concern shared by planners, for the effects that large scale cotton manufacturing would have on the character of the population:

The operatives in the manufacturing cities of Europe, were notoriously of the lowest character, for intelligence and morals. The question therefore arose, and was deeply considered, whether this degradation was the result of the peculiar occupation, or of other and distinct

causes.²³

Once having decided that "profitable employment" did not have "any tendency to deteriorate the character," the founders avoided the dangers of establishing a permanent proletariat by drawing their work force from among the "well-educated and virtuous" Yankee girls eager to spend a few years at their "philanthropic manufacturing colleges."

The companies owned the barrack-like boarding houses and required the girls to live in them as a part of their contract. Board was automatically deleted from monthly wages. The boarding-house keepers were "answerable for any improper conduct in their houses."²⁴ and were to report anyone guilty of such. The girls had no privacy, lived six and sometimes eight to a room with three beds, and exercised what has been described as a "moral police force" over each other, shunning anyone suspected of wrong-doing. The companies approved and advanced this attitude. The Lawrence Company stated in its contract regulations that employees:



Photographs from M.B. Schnapper, *American Labor: A Pictorial Social History* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1972); originals in the Library of Congress Collection, Washington.

must on all occasions, both in their words and in their actions, show that they are penetrated by a laudable love of temperance and virtue, and animated by a sense of their moral and social obligations.²⁵

Girls were discharged not only for "immoral conduct," committed or not, but also for "bad language, for disrespect, for attending dancing classes, or for any cause that the agents or overseers thought sufficient."²⁶

Contracts also required church attendance,²⁷ one full year's employment before receiving an "honorable discharge," and two weeks notice of intention to leave. "In return the company bound itself to only two conditions: to pay wages (not a specific wage) once a month, and to have the employees vaccinated against the smallpox at its own expense."²⁸ Eviction and the blacklist, which extended to affiliated companies as far away as Maine, were used to control any workers who became 'unruly' or began to 'agitate.'

"The Lowell Factory Girl" was composed in this period before the organization of the Lowell Female Labor Reform Association in 1844. If a girl because of necessity found herself in the mill and unable to quit, then the song could at least function as wish fulfillment. If she were on strike, it would strengthen her spirit and act as a reminder to herself and to others of the injustices she suffered.

IV.

When the song entered oral tradition it lost its strong narrative structure. The changes it undergoes basically follow Tristram Coffin's three stages of Anglo-American ballads, as developed in his study, *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*.²⁹ Like many others, the song moves away from well-plotted narrative toward lyricism, yet maintains some of its occupational detail.

"The Factory Girl's Come-All-Ye" of Maine³⁰ is the most localized of all the versions, and the most humorous. The mill girl will return to Boston and no longer have to suffer the discomfort of half-baked beans. It maintains a brief narrative structure which encloses the *No more will I* list of grievances, most of which are compressed from the earlier broadside. However, additional relevant material is added to the core.

The Factory Girl's Come-All-Ye

- 1) Come all ye Lewiston fac'try girls,
I want you to understand,
I'm a-going to leave this factory,
And return to my native land.

Refrain:

- Dum de wickety,
Dum de way.
- 2) No more will I take my Shaker and shawl
And hurry to the mill;
No more will I work so pesky hard
To earn a dollar bill.
 - 3) No more will I take the towel and soap
To go the sink and wash;
No more will the overseer say
"You're making a terrible splosh!"
 - 4) No more will I take the comb and go
To the glass to comb my hair;
No more the overseer will say
"Oh! what are you doing there?"
 - 5) No more I'll take my bobbins out,
No more I'll put them in,
No more the overseer will say
"You're weaving your cloth too thin!"
 - 6) No more will I eat cold pudding,
No more will I eat hard bread,
No more will I eat those half-baked beans,
For I vow! They'll killing me dead!
 - 7) I'm going back to Boston town
And live on Tremont Street;
And I want all you fac'try girls
To come to my house and eat!

Collected in 1913 by Phillips Barry from Mrs. Mary E. Hindle of Bangor, Maine, who had learned the song in 1875 from Mrs. Sarah Green. See Barry, *Bulletin*, p. 12-13.

Nancy Dixon's version takes us to South Carolina, 1899. What she could remember of "The Factory Girl" is most poetically phrased. It is closer to the two earlier versions than the two later ones in narrative elements, meter, rhyme-scheme, and the use of the contracted verb form *I'll* in the listings. For example, Stanza 2 contains an invitation to the factory girls to visit when she is married and no longer has to work. This occurs in Stanza 18 of "The Lowell Factory Girl" and Stanza 7 of the Maine version, although the latter does not specifically mention marriage. Both the later Florida and North Carolina versions, which are identical except for minor word changes,³¹ have lost this invitation but retain the emphasis on marriage.

Factory Girl

- 1) Yonder stands that spinnin'room boss
He looks so fair and stout;
I hope you'll marry a factory girl
Before this year goes out.

Refrain:

- Pity me all day, Pity me I pray;
Pity me my darlin', and take me far away.
- 2) I'll now say to you factory girls,
Come and see me if you can;
I'm gonna quit this factory work
And marry a nice young man.

- 3) No more I hear this roarin'
This roarin' over my head.
When you poor girls is hard at work
And me at home in bed.

Collected in 1962 by Archie Green from Nancy Dixon in Rockingham, N.C., who had learned the song in 1899 in Darlington, S.C. See Green, *Babies in the Mill*, "Notes," p.7

The correlations between Nancy Dixon's version and the earlier two and Nancy's and the later two, suggest that hers stands midway between all four. One more example might make this clearer. Stanza 3 tells of the roaring over her head and the pleasure of remaining in bed. This is very similar to Stanza 3 of both the Florida and North Carolina versions. "The Lowell Factory Girl" has no direct reference to noise with the factory, but it does comment on the superiority of being able to stay in bed to a later hour. In addition, when Nancy's brother, Dorsey, reworked the song and recorded it on *Babies in the Mill*, he added the following stanza:

No more will I hear that whistle blow
The sound of it I hate.
No more I'll hear that bossman say
"Young girl you are too late."³²

It is unclear, according to collector Archie Green, whether Dorsey learned this stanza from his sister or composed it; however, this reference to the whistle, the factory bell of the twentieth century, is also found in the two later versions.

Untitled

- 1) No more shall I work in the factory
To greasy up my clothes,
No more shall I work in the factory
With splinters in my toes.
- Refrain:
- It's pity me, my darling,
It's pity me, I say,
It's pity me, my darling,
And carry me far away.
- 2) No more shall I hear the bosses say,
"Boys, you had better daulf."
No more shall I hear the bosses say,
"Spinners, you had better clean off."
 - 3) No more shall I hear the drummer wheels
A-rolling over my head,
When factory girls are hard at work
I'll be in my bed.
 - 4) No more shall I hear the whistle blow
To call me up too soon,
No more shall I hear the whistle blow
To call me from my home.
 - 5) No more shall I see the super come
All dressed up so fine;
For I know I'll marry a country boy
Before the year is round.

- 6) No more shall I wear the old black dress
Greasy all around;
No more shall I wear the old black bonnet
With holes all in the crown.

Collected by John Lomax in 1913 from a "Wandering singer plying her trade by the roadside in Fort Worth, during an annual meeting of the Texas Cattle Ranchers' Association" who had picked it up in Florida. See Lomax, "Some Types of American Folksongs," *Journal of American Folklore*, Volume XXVIII (January, 1915), p.13.

The version collected by John Lomax and "No More Shall I Work in the Factory" both contain only the listing of grievances. All stanzas begin with *No more shall I* and are highly repetitious. The singer remains adamant about refusing to stay at work. Loss of independence and status continues to be emphasized, in the figure of the supervisor, the blowing of the whistle, and the external appearance of clothing. The song has become more generalized in identification, yet retains its subjectivity and occupational detail.

No More Shall I Work in the Factory

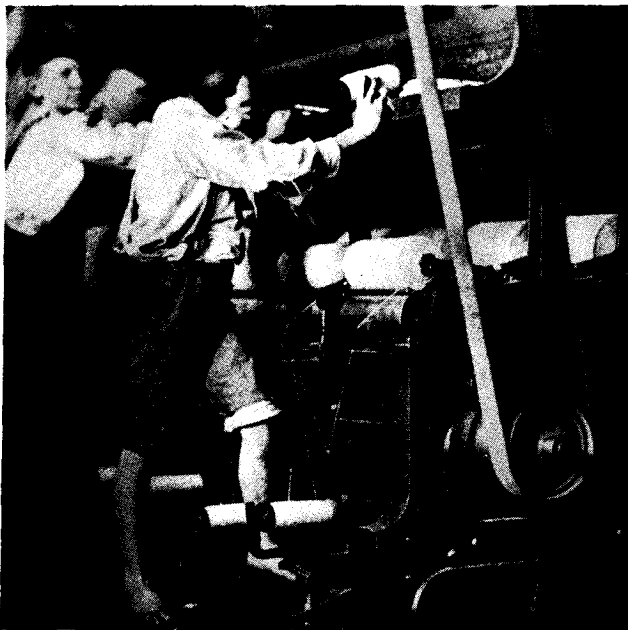
- 1) No more shall I work in the Factory,
To greasy up my clothes;
No more shall I work in the factory
With splinters in my toes.
- Refrain:
- It's pity me my darling,
It's pity me I say
It's pity me my darling,
And carry me away.
- 2) No more shall I hear the bosses say,
"Boys you'd better daulf."
No more shall I hear those bosses say
"Spinners, you'd better clean off."
 - 3) No more shall I hear the drummer wheels
A-rolling over my hear,
When factories are hard at work,
I'll be in my bed.
 - 4) No more shall I hear the whistle blow
To call me so soon;
No more shall I hear the whistle blow
To call me from my home.
 - 5) No more shall I see the super come,
All dressed up so proud;
For I know I'll marry a country boy
Before the year is out.
 - 6) No more shall I wear the old black dress,
Greasy all around;
No more shall I wear the old black bonnet
With holes all in the crown.

From the People's Song Library. According to John Greenway, this version was "collected more recently in North Carolina." However, evidence suggests this version was not "collected" but rather reworked from a printed copy of the Lomax version. See Greenway, p.125f

V.

By the time Nancy had learned the "Factory Girl" song, the United States had gone through a civil war, and the South had experienced Reconstruction. Ante-bellum southern textile manufacturing had been primarily small-scale family efforts aimed at supplying the needs of the owners, their workers and neighbors.³³ At least one attempt was made during this time to import New England factory girls. This occurred in Georgia in 1850. As Frederick Olmstead wrote in 1856, the girls were induced to come down and "work in newly-established cotton factories, by the offer of high wages, but have found their position so unpleasant—owing to the general degradation of the laboring class—as very soon to be forced to return."³⁴

During the 1880's, the South underwent an "industrial awakening" and placed all its energy in a cotton mill campaign in order to restore its dignity and improve its economic state.³⁵ In agriculture, cotton was the cash crop. By the 1890's, however, farmers were realizing less than five cents on a bale.³⁶ A system of crop liens and chattel mortgages developed. Many lost their farms, and whole families were employed in the mills. Tenant farmers and large numbers of poor whites, a class of unemployed that had existed prior to the Civil War, also joined the labor force. From 1900 on, a greater percentage of workers was drawn from the mountains. With regard to the black population, as Broadus Mitchell states, "The cotton factories offered a field from which Negroes were excluded."³⁷ In 1890, women composed 40.6% of the southern textile work force and children 23.7%.³⁸ The ancestry of these



workers was very similar to that of the early New England factory girls. And once again, historians point out, "There is no distinction in blood between employers and employees."³⁹ Many became part of a permanent mill force; however, they exercised great mobility in moving on a circuit from mill to mill, often in the hope of bettering their conditions. Marriage no longer served as an escape from mill work as it did before World War I; rather than tending the home while others in the family worked, the new wife remained in the mill.⁴⁰

Mill villages were built where the companies owned the workers' homes. Wages were often paid in scrip, redeemable only at the company store. Often the ministers, teachers, and later, the social workers, were hired and/or paid by the company, a pattern of paternalism and regulation similar in many ways to that of Lowell. Eviction and the blacklist quickly evolved as forceful corporation tools of social control. The factory girl's song would live in the South as it had earlier in New England, not simply because there were textile mills with their weavers and doffers, but because the same threats existed for the workers—the sense of a loss of independence and dignity.

Yet to be explained, however, is a major difference between the northern and southern versions of the song: the change in chorus which first appears in Nancy's version and remains firmly attached in the southern family of the song, a change from *Hit-re-i-re-a-re-o/Hit-re-i-re-a* and *Dum de wickety,/Dum de way*, to

*Pity me all day
Pity me I pray,
Pity me my darlin'
And take me far away.*

In oral tradition, the song lost at least two nonsense refrains which have strong association with the British Isles, especially Ireland. It picked up a chorus more in keeping with the sentimentality of American broadsides. This change corresponds to a shift in the song from the lightness of nonsense to the poignancy of pity and a movement away from a strong identification with Europe: if it was difficult for the New England mill girl of mid-nineteenth century to escape from the factory and return to her *native dell*, it was even more despairing for her southern counterpart of the early twentieth century.

Footnotes

1. "Zipper songs" have been used by a number of writers to describe a traditional, repetitive stanza style which allows for great variation in the verses, returning to a constant chorus; e.g., "We Shall Not Be Moved." John Greenway, *American Folksongs of Protest* (Phila-

delphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1953), pp. 16-17. "Agit-prop" refers to songs consciously created to express a particular ideological stance. Many have been based on traditional song style. For discussion see, R. Serge Denisoff, *Great Day Coming* (Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1971), p. 25.

2. The earliest music given is that collected by Phillips Barry in Maine—Phillips Barry, ed., *Bulletin of the Folk-song Society of the North-East*, Number 2 (1931; Reprinted, Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1960), pp. 12-13. This tune differs from Nancy Dixon's collected by Archie Green and transcribed by Jim Watson from *Babies in the Mill*, Testament T-3301, recorded August, 1961 and 1962. The People's Song Library suggests that the song be sung to "Ten Thousand Miles"—Greenway, pp. 125-26.

3. Greenway, pp. 124-25.

4. For examples of such accounts see: Harriet Robinson, *Loom and Spindle, or Life Among the Early Mill Girls* (New York, 1891); Rev. William Scoresby, *American Factories and their Female Operatives* (London, 1845); Henry A. Miles, *Lowell As It Was and As It Is*, 2nd ed. (Lowell, 1846). One economist's study is Edith Abbott's *Women in Industry* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1910), especially Chapter 12.

5. Hannah Josephson, *The Golden Threads: New England's Mill Girls and Magnates* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1949), p. 78.

6. Josephson, p. 78.

7. George F. Kengott, *The Record of a City* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1912), Chapter VI; Norman Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840-1860* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1924), pp. 112-13.

8. Joseph Rayback, *A History of American Labor* (New York: The Free Press, 1959), p. 93.

9. Actually the Lowell mills were not much affected by the 1837 depression until the 1840's. Josephson, pp. 207-08.

10. *The Lowell Offering*, the first known journal to be written exclusively by women, was published from 1840 to 1845.

11. Background on the New England factory girls can be found in the histories already mentioned; on the Irish workers and the transition from transient to permanent factory population, see: Josephson, pp. 295-97; Ware, esp. Chapter IX; Herbert Lahne, *The Cotton Mill Worker* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1944), p. 72.

12. Josephson, p. 43.

13. Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964) includes an interesting discussion of the reaction against industrialism in American culture during the 1840's.

14. This is based on a time-table for the ringing of bells at the Lowell Mills given in Kengott, p. 23, with additional information from Abbott, pp. 126-28.

15. Josephson, p. 75.

16. Based on a Lowell Mills schedule given in Kengott, p. 24.

17. Josephson, p. 80.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *Ibid.*

20. Kengott, p. 225.

21. Francis Lowell also devised the "Waltham system" of manufacture which included hiring young, unmarried New England girls as workers and housing them in company boarding-houses.

22. Abbott, p. 103.

23. Nathan Appleton, *Introduction of the Power Loom, and Origin of Lowell* (Lowell, Mass.: B.H. Penhallow, 1858), p. 15.

24. From the regulations of the Lowell Manufacturing Company given in Josephson, p. 71.

25. Josephson, p. 72.

26. Ware, p. 107.

27. Initially, the operatives were required to pay pew rent and attend the Episcopal church regardless of their own religious persuasion. It was the church of one of the owners and Kirk Bott, the company agent. Josephson, p. 46.

28. Josephson, p. 72.

29. Tristram P. Coffin, *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: American Folklore Society, 1963).

30. Phillips Barry, who collected this version, also makes note of another printed in the *Boston Globe* around 1861. Barry, p. 13.

31. The changes between these two versions are basically contractions and losses found in the second. The People's Song Library version improves upon a rhyme in Stanza 5. This is probably a reworking of the song from printed text.

32. *Babies in the Mill*.

33. Broadus Mitchell, *The Rise of Cotton Mills in the South* (New York: De Capo Press, 1921), Chapter I.

34. Frederick Law Olmstead, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (New York: Dix and Edwards, 1856), p. 543.

35. Two studies on the Southern "industrial awakening," the background of workers, and the development of mill villages are those of Broadus Mitchell (see footnote 33) and Holland Thompson, *From the Cotton Field to the Cotton Mills* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1906).

36. Thompson, p. 69.

37. Mitchell, footnote p. 180.

38. Mitchell, p. 180.

39. Mitchell, p. 161.

40. This change is indicated by evidence found by Dr. Tom Terrill of University of South Carolina from his research of North Carolina manuscript census (1840-1880), payroll ledgers (1890-1915), and federal labor statistics.

41. Greenway, pp. 122-24.

42. Barry, pp. 12-13.

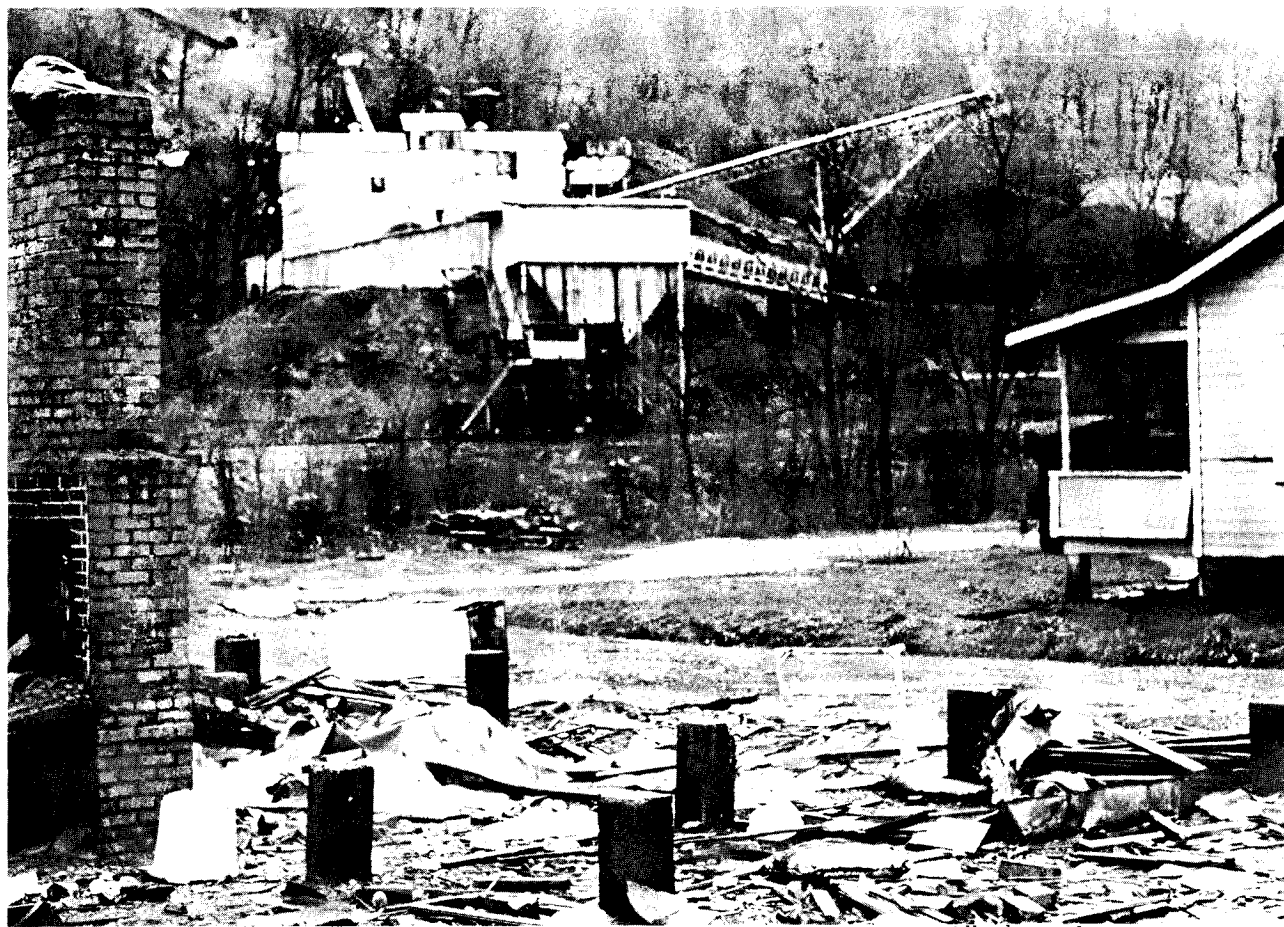
43. Green, *Babies in the Mill*, "Notes," p. 7.

44. John A. Lomax, "Some Types of American Folk-songs," *Journal of American Folklore*, XXVIII (January, 1915), p. 13.

45. Greenway, pp. 125-26.

THE BROOKSIDE MINE

1974



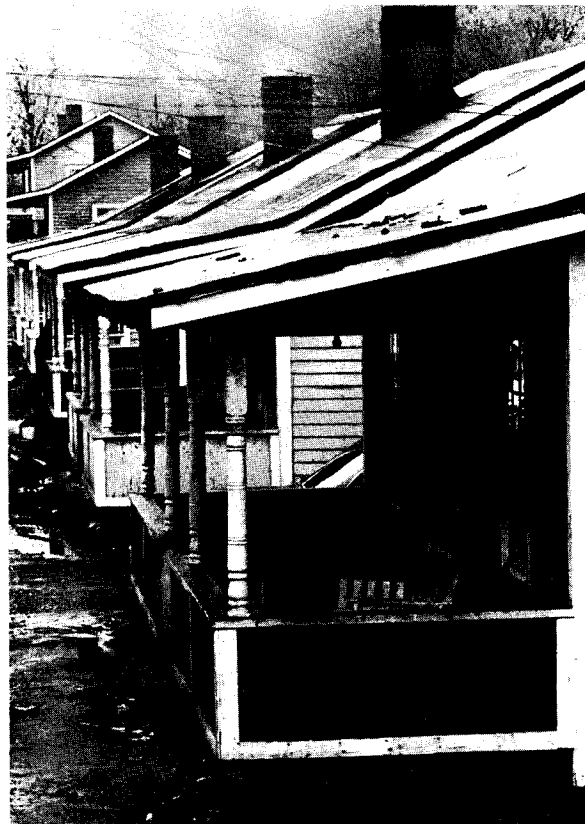
All photos by Tom Randolph

The idle Brookside mine looms over the company-owned mining camp. Whenever a miner leaves, the company destroys the house, leaving the camp littered.

In July, 1973, 180 miners went out on strike against the Eastover Mining Company's Brookside mine in Harlan County, Kentucky. Pay is not as bad as it was in the 1930's in the strife-torn area, but conditions in the mine and mine camp resemble those described in a number of songs from the period. Aunt Molly Jackson, a tough champion of unionization for coal miners, wrote many herself, and having lost her husband, brother and son in the mines, she knew only too well the grief and outrage of life in Kentucky. Her song with her introduction, is presented here with the more recent song about Harlan County by Si Kahn, a free-lance writer-

organizer and coordinator for much of the support work for the Brookside strikers. The men are demanding the standard United Mine Workers of America contract, but the Eastover Mining Company has thus far resisted this first organizing drive by the new UMWA leadership. Demands for a safety committee with power to cordon off hazardous portions of the mine, a health and pension program financed from production royalties, and portal-to-portal pay, have been met with injunctions, hired thugs, blacklisting, outright bribery, and jail terms. The connection between coal and electricity alluded to in Kahn's song is no

idle generalization, for it turns out Eastover Mining is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Duke Power Company, the light company serving the North and South Carolina Piedmont and the sixth largest private electric company in the U.S. The UMWA is working with a number of individuals and groups in the Carolinas, including the Institute, to pressure Duke on its home ground. Using a variety of tactics, from newspaper ads to intervention in Duke's rate increase hearings to mass picketing outside the company's headquarters, the miners and their supporters hope to win a critical campaign. If Duke is unconcerned about its miners or customers, it does worry about its income and stock prices—both of which are apparently now suffering due to the strike. The song by Aunt Molly Jackson is available on her record, *The Songs and Stories of Aunt Molly Jackson*, Folkways Records, Album #FH 5457, 121 W. 47th St., N.Y.C. Her half-sister, Sarah Gunning, sings "Dreadful Memories" and other tunes in an excellent album which also features Nimrod Workman, George Tucker and Hazel Dickens: *Come All You Coal Miners*, produced and edited by Guy Carawan, Rounder Record 4005, Roundhouse Records, P.O. Box 474, Somerville, Mass. 02144, or Highlander Center, Box 245A, RFD 3, New Market, Tenn. 37820. Si Kahn has recorded a tape cassette of "Brookside Strike" and other struggle songs available for \$1.50 from Cut Cane Associates, P.O. Box 98, Mineral Bluff, Ga. 30559.



Houses in the Brookside camp still lack indoor plumbing; consequently, raw sewage from out-houses pours directly into the nearby stream.



Riding the conveyor belt to and from the work area at an operating UMW mine.



In 1974, women like this Brookside miner's wife are still harassed for supporting unions. She was one of the women jailed for violating a Judge's anti-picketing order.

BROOKSIDE STRIKE

By Si Kahn

*I'm tired of working for nothing
And bad top that's ready to fall
If we can't dig this coal without danger
We ain't gonna dig it at all*

Refrain:

*And the wind blows hard up the holler
Through the trees with a whistling sound
But the sun's gonna shine
In this old mine
Ain't no one can turn us around*

*If it weren't for the underground miner
Not a light in this country would burn
You'd think that they'd work with the union
But they fight us at every damn turn*

*The bosses drive Cadillacs and Lincolns
The miners drive Chevys and Fords
There ain't but three things you can trust in
The union, yourself and the Lord*

*I'm making my stand here at Brookside
And I'll use any tool I can find
You can lock me up tight in your jailhouse
But you can't put a chain on my mind*

"In 19 and 31 the Kentucky coal miners was asked to dig coal for 33 cents a ton and they had to pay the company for the carbide to make a light and coalite to shock the coal. And they had to pay for their picks and augers to be sharpened—the coal company took one dollar from each man's wages every month for having their picks and augers sharpened. And each man paid two dollars a month for a company doctor even if he did not have to call the doctor once. All we had to make a light in our shacks was kerosene lamps, and after the miners was blacklisted for joining the union March 5, 1931, the company doctor refused to come to any one of the coal miner's families unless he was paid in advance. So I had to nurse all the little children till the last breath left them, and all the light I had was a string in a can lid with a little bacon grease in it. Kerosene was five cents a quart, and I could not get five cents. Thirty-seven babies died in my arms in the last three months of 1931. Their stomachs busted open; they was mortified inside. Oh, what an awful way for a baby to die. Not a thing to give our babies to eat but the strong soap from soup beans, and that they bled inside and mortified, and died. And died so hard that before we got help from other states my nerves was so stirred up for four years afterward by the memory of them babies suffering and dying in my arms, and me sitting by their little dead bodies three or four hours before daylight in the dark to keep some hungry dog or cat from eating up little dead bodies. Then four years later I still had such sad memories of these babies that I wrote this song."

DREADFUL MEMORIES

Aunt Molly Jackson

*Dreadful memories! How they linger,
How they pain my precious soul!
Little children, sick and hungry
Sick and Hungry, weak and cold.*

*Little children, cold and hungry,
Without any food at all to eat;
They had no clothes to put on their bodies,
They had no shoes to put on their feet.*

Chorus:

*Dreadful Memories! How they linger,
How they fill my heart with pain;
Oh, how hard I've tried to forget them,
But I find it all in vain.*

*I can't forget them, little babies,
With golden hair as soft as silk;
Slowly dying from starvation,
Their parents could not give them milk.*

*I can't forget them coal miners' children
That starved to death for want of milk;
While the coal operators and their wives and their
children*

Were all dressed in jewels and silk.

*Dreadful memories! how they haunt me
As the lonely moments fly;
Oh, how them little babies suffered!
I saw them starve to death and die.*



A black lung victim breathes oxygen for temporary relief. The Harlan Hospital, where he is a patient, was built in the 1950's with funds donated by the UMWA.

PIEDMONT COUNTRY BLUES

by Bill Phillips

On a snowy day in 1948, the Durham, North Carolina Welfare Department received a call that the Reverend Gary Davis lay ill in a rented room, unable to care for a sprained wrist and leg sores. A social worker took Davis to Duke Hospital, and the Salvation Army helped with food. Living on the edge of poverty and still unknown, the blind, 53-year-old Davis was to become one of the most famous and admired practitioners of the Piedmont ragtime blues.

The black blues musicians who created a distinctive musical style in Durham during the thirties and early forties shared Gary Davis' obscurity. Few outside of the black community knew of the existence of this group of important local artists. Gary Davis was the best guitarist among them, but his religious convictions prevented him from playing the more commercially popular urban blues. Only Blind Boy Fuller (ne Fulton Allen) achieved a degree of fame during the creative decade of the thirties. But even though his records sold well in the South, Fuller still lived in near poverty and had to ask the Welfare Department for permission to make money playing on the street. Sonny Terry, now the king of country blues harmonica players, recorded occasionally with Fuller but remained for the most part unknown, as did his present performing partner, Brownie McGhee. Another Durham bluesman, Willie Trice, has recently been "rediscovered" and invited to perform at the National Folk Festival in Washington. Davis, Fuller, Terry, McGhee, Trice—few people knew them outside of Depression-torn Durham, but together they generated a musical tradition whose influence has spread throughout this country and into Europe.

The Music

Unlike the sultry, mournful music of the Mississippi Delta, the Piedmont country blues is enthusiastic foot-tapping music. Despite slow bluesy moments, it is distinguished by a ragtime

energy accentuated by the rhythmic rapping of a washboard and punctuated by the whoops and calls of the harmonica. The men who made the Piedmont blues attained an astonishing level of technical virtuosity while engaged in a debilitating struggle for survival. Their music pulsates with all the hopeful feelings and painful memories of a generation of blacks living in the industrialized southern Piedmont.

Playing with Sonny Terry on harmonica and George Washington, better known as "Bull City Red," on washboard, Blind Boy Fuller created a compelling and distinctive sound reminiscent of old banjo rhythms and dance pieces.¹ On snappy instrumental pieces like "Step It Up and Go" and "Piccola Rag," the washboard player achieved an exciting clickety-clack on the board with thimbles on his fingers. But Willie Trice says that if you really wanted to make some noise, you used shot gun shells instead. Sonny Terry's harmonica style as heard on reissues of Fuller's recordings is the same powerful sound that can be heard today on many Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry albums. Fuller's strong voice and skilled guitar, combined with Terry's harmonica and Bull City Red's washboard, must have brought a thrilling sound to the streets of Durham.

While Fuller usually played in this accompanied fashion, Gary Davis was most often found playing solo. Possibly Davis was too much of an individualist personally and musically to play with others. But he had also mastered a much more complex style than any of his contemporaries. As Willie Trice put it, "While you were playing one chord, Gary would play five." Davis could play counterpoint lines on the bass and treble strings,

A native of Durham, North Carolina, Bill Phillips has worked for several years in public education and social services, and enjoys playing his banjo and guitar. He is currently conducting a tour of traditional musicians in North Carolina public schools under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

(From "Ragtime
Blues Guitarists,"
S. Grossman,
Oak Publications,
New York, N.Y.)



The Reverend Gary Davis

and his facility on banjo and harmonica broadened the range of musical sounds he could capitalize on. In one religious song, for example, he depicts the singing of the men's and women's parts in a church by simultaneously playing both parts on the guitar.² Despite this versatility, Davis had only one recording session, in 1935, before he was fifty-five years old. However, Stefan Grossman, a longtime student of Davis', has confirmed the fact that Davis taught much to Blind Boy Fuller, including pieces that Fuller went on to popularize.

The guts of this music lay in strong finger picking on the guitar and deep throated, hearty singing. The guitar, picked with the thumb and one or two fingers, was sometimes made of steel with a metal resonator to project a sharp sound. Blues verses often repeated the first line twice and then concluded with a rhyming line:

If you lose your money, please don't lose your mind—

If you lose your money, please don't lose your mind—

If you lose your woman, please don't fool with mine.³

But other songs like "Piccolo Rag" by Fuller do not follow the blues form in script or music:

You gotta stop doing what you're doing to me mama,
you're just gonna run me wild.

You gotta stop doing what you're doing to me baby,
I mean just what I say.

Say when I'm on the phone hollerin' whoa-haw-gee,
My gal's uptown hollerin' "who wants me?"

You gotta stop doing what you're doing to me mama,
you're just gonna run me wild.⁴

The traditional blues musical form goes through a familiar chord progression and leaves an unforgettable effect on the listener. A song in the key of E often completes the first line accompanied by an E chord. The second line begins with an A chord and ends with an E. The third line begins on a B chord and hits an A chord somewhere in the middle of the line, all to resolve at the end to an E. The pattern is repeated with variations endlessly and can be done in any key, though E, A, C, and G were the most popular ones. A verse from Blind Boy Fuller's "Big House Bound"

is typical:

E
I never will forget the day they transferred
E
me to the county jail,
A
I never will forget the day they transferred
E
me to the county jail.
B⁷ A
I had shot the woman I love, ain't no one
E
come to go my bail. 5

The Musicians

"Big House Bound" also illustrates how the ragtime blues emerged from the musician's experiences, for Fuller based the song on an incident in his own turbulent life. As Willie Trice tells it today, Fuller was generally amiable but had a fiery temper and always carried a pistol in his belt. The blind musician judged his aim from the sound of an adversary's voice. "If Fuller got mad at you, you better stand still and not say a word," Trice recalled. And as "Big House Bound" says, in one of those heated moments, Fuller shot his wife Cora in the leg.⁶

Fuller was an ardent poker player and a disconcerting opponent in a game. Evidently he played with the help of a sighted person who held his cards and whispered the contents to him. But all hell broke loose when Fuller thought someone was cheating him. "He was mighty smart," explains Trice. "But people didn't know what to do when a blind man began waving a pistol in their faces."

J. B. Long, Fuller's manager, was not exempt from the musician's ire. A white merchant in neighboring Burlington, Long acted as the talent scout and agent for the black blues of the Piedmont.⁷ He contracted with musicians to take them to New York to record, then benefited both from the recording sessions and the retail record sales in his store. Fuller resented Long's middle-man profits, and on at least one recording trip became so enraged that he threatened to shoot him. "After a lot of talking," Willie Trice recalled, "he finally cooled down." In 1939, Fuller hoped to get out from under Long's management altogether and, since the State Blind Commission encouraged self-sufficiency, caseworker William Lewis began seeking an independent contract with a record company for Fuller.

Lewis learned that Fuller was under contract

to Long to receive \$200 each time he recorded twelve songs, although that amount varied depending on whose word is relied upon. Fuller and Lewis came to the agreement that Fuller would not renew his current contract with Long, which would expire on April 21, 1939, and Lewis wrote both Long and the American Recording Company explaining this intent. Neither answered. Upon the expiration of the contract, Long wrote Lewis saying that while Fuller was no longer under contract to him, he was still bound to the American Recording Company. When Lewis wrote ARC they simply referred him back to Long. In the wake of the confusion, Fuller agreed to go record for Long in Memphis with Sonny Terry in July, 1939. So ended Fuller's efforts at gaining an independent contract.

Despite this underlying tension, Long, still managing his clothing store in Burlington over thirty years later, remembers Blind Boy Fuller with fondness. According to Long, he tried on many occasions to provide Fuller and his wife with moral support and financial aid. He even offered them a free house on his property—which Fuller declined. Obviously paternalistic in his relations with black musicians, Long also understood and loved their music. The recording business did not bring in a large income, but some of what Long made probably, in justice, should have gone to the musicians themselves. At any rate, Long was single-handedly responsible for recording the bluesmen in the Durham area. Besides arranging sessions for Fuller, Gary Davis, and Willie Trice, Long paired Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry into the most durable team of performers to survive the era. Long saw the blues as a financial investment, but his interest in Piedmont artists and their music was genuine and, in the long run, invaluable.

Like his friend, Blind Boy Fuller, the Reverend Gary Davis had also lost his sight at an early age. Born in 1895 in Lawrence County, South Carolina, Davis learned very young to play banjo, harmonica and guitar. He studied at the South Carolina School for the Blind where he learned New York point, a forerunner of Braille. An early marriage ended when Davis moved to Durham around 1919.

Although Fuller and Davis' music was closely intertwined, the two men were a study in contrasts. Fuller was a flashy dresser, fiery and temperamental. Gary Davis, a powerful singer and dazzling guitar player, was also a man of God. A philosopher and a street-corner preacher, he practiced an almost painful self-discipline in his effort to overcome the handicap of sightlessness. "It's no longer necessary," he told a welfare caseworker, "for a blind man to sit in a corner and do nothing. . . . Everybody can find out something. I

have learned a lot even though I still don't know it all. I do know more than some people who seem to know nothing."

Through the Depression, both men depended on the Durham County Welfare Department for periodic aid. And our few glimpses of their lives during this period come from the reports of their caseworkers. In order to be eligible for their \$23 a month assistance, Fuller and Davis had to conceal the irregular income from their music, and the welfare records reveal a constant cat-and-mouse game with officials trying to determine their clients' eligibility. "Yes ma'am," Davis told an official who managed to find him in his rented room. "I know you have been here several times, but you know I am inclined to preach the gospel, and I got to be gone a lot since God called me." The worker asked if he made any money on these trips. Davis wryly answered, "The only success I have is saving souls, which is pay enough." Before the caseworker could continue, Mary Hinton, Davis' kindly landlord, interrupted, complaining that the heat was about to kill her. That started Davis on a sermon about being prepared to die. Taking his text from "Be ye also ready," Davis launched into a detailed sermon on the necessity of preparation for the inevitable "flight to glory." He concluded by giving the worker a pamphlet he had written on the constancy of death, a theme which runs through many of Davis' songs:

You may be rich, you may be low
You may be rich, you may be poor
Brother when God gets ready, you got to move.

You may run, can't be caught
You may hide, can't be found
Brother when God gets ready, you got to move.

You may be blind, cannot see
You may be deaf, cannot hear
Brother when God gets ready, you got to move.⁸

On another occasion, Mary Hinton elaborated on Davis' religious convictions. "His mind runs backwards, you know, and I believe it's because he has just thought about the Bible and religion too much. A person can think too much, and I believe Gary has. He sometimes wakes me up at two or three o'clock in the morning going to bed, falling over a chair. He sits up and reads his Bible that late." Nervous and intense, Davis at times seemed to be in a world of his own, uttering incomprehensible phrases. This intensity comes through in the highly charged, almost desperate urgency in his voice. To listen to his recently available records is to be completely caught up in the convincing, compelling spirit of his sound. It has a



Blind Boy Fuller

(From "Ragtime Blues Guitarists," Stefan Grossman, Oak Publications, New York, New York.)

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BLIND BOY FULLER

7-05-56 NEW OH RED!
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1-04-73 Sweet Honey Hole	8-08-54 Mama Let Me Lay It on You
7-02-56 If You Don't Give Me What I Want	Black and Tan
7-02-56 Walking My Troubles Away	6-05-54 My Beautiful Sugar Plum
(I Got a Woman Crazy for Me)	Evil Hearted Woman
7-03-57 She's Funny That Way	6-03-60 Somebody's Been Playing with That Thing
Log Cabin Blues	Baby You Gotta Change Your Mind
Homeless and Hungry Blues	6-01-56 I'm a Rattlesnake's Daddy
6-01-56 Cat Man Blues	Rag, Rag, Rag
Keep Away from My Woman	35-10-32 I'm Climbin' on Top of the Hill
6-11-71 Big Red Blues	Ain't It a Cryin' Shame
When Your Gal Puts Up and Leaves	35-10-17 Baby I Don't Have to Worry
6-10-56 Truckin' My Blues Away	Looking for My Woman
Babe You Got to Be Better	

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Harold Life's a Pain	Big Bill	You Drink Too Much	
7-01-57 These Auto Keep Bitin' Me	Big Bill	6-12-00 Oh Red!	
7-04-68 Terrible Flood Blues	Big Bill	Ten Waited Too Long	
7-02-54 Black Widow Spider	Big Bill	7-01-70 Trouble in Mind	
Oh Babe (Don't Do Me That Way)	Big Bill	Georgia Man	
7-03-54 Cherry Hill	Big Bill	Stop Hanging Around	
Seven-Eleven (Dixie Please Don't Fail Me)	Big Bill	My Baby Won't Pay Me No Mind	
7-01-71 You See the Sign of Judgment	Big Bill	Buddy Moss	
Repair Men—Spirituals	Big Bill	7-04-78 Poor and Ain't Got a Dime	
6-03-62 Got My Ticket—Spirituals	Big Bill	I'm Givin' and I'm Worryin'	
Out on the Ocean Selling	Big Bill	Dipper Bay Council	
6-12-53 Standing by the Radiator—Spirituals	Big Bill	(Blind Boy Fuller's Buddy)	
What Kinds Shows Do the Angels Wear	Big Bill	7-03-73 The Dirty Dimes No. 2	
6-09-62 New Dry Bones—Spirituals	Big Bill	I. C. Moon Blues	
Lord I Can't Turn Back	Big Bill	New Strangers Blues	
6-07-58 What Move Can Jesus Do—Spirituals	Big Bill	Georgia Head Blues	
Who Was John	Big Bill	Fraggy Bottom	
		6-11-62 Let's Get Dressed and Trunk	
		I'm a Rattlesnake's Daddy	
		The Blue Chippin'	

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unique effect upon the listener, an effect rarely felt from current singers or trained performers.

In his early life, Davis had learned every aspect of the country blues being played around him. He came to Durham with a full blues repertoire and added his own twist to much of it. However, religion began to fill a special need for Davis, and he began to sing gospel songs rather than the earlier secular blues. Finally, Davis adapted his guitar technique to gospel music and abandoned the blues completely. The tension between blues and gospel singing is a familiar story. A blues singer sometimes feels something missing in his or her life and finds religion to be a solace—or will bow to social pressure from a middle class which often looks disparagingly upon the blues. Elizabeth Cotten, who lived in nearby Chapel Hill during the thirties, describes a similar experience:

When I learned how to play my guitar, I began to play, as my deacon used to call them, the worldly songs—the blues. . . . Then I joined the church, and they told me I couldn't play those worldly songs and serve God. I had to serve God or the devil, one. Then, as much as I loved Stella (her guitar), I decided I'd try to stop playing the worldly songs. So, I tried playing

Christian songs, spiritual songs, songs they sing in church. And I kept doing that gradually, and I did put Stella down.⁹

Many years later, after "Libba" Cotten had moved to Washington, D.C., she became a domestic in the home of the musical Seeger family. Discovering that she once played guitar, they encouraged her to practice again, and she revived the old memories of her songs and soon began performing. Her song "Freight Train" is now a classic for folk-singers and budding guitar players.

So, the conflict between blues and gospel is a lifelong issue with some blues singers. In 1944, Davis married a woman from Raleigh and moved to New York; in great demand at festivals and as a recording artist, Davis eventually returned to singing some of the old blues songs and became one of the patriarchs of the folk revival. As he put it, "Everything people say is a sin, is not a sin." Popular artists recorded his songs, and with the royalties from his song "Samson and Delilah" sung by Peter, Paul and Mary, he bought a new house¹⁰ Young guitar enthusiasts in the New York area spent hours learning Davis' guitar techniques, and Stefan Grossman is now preparing two instruction books devoted solely to Gary Davis to be published by Oak Publications.



Biltmore Hotel, Pettigrew St., Durham, April, 1974

Pettigrew Street

In 1935, if one were to travel one block south from Main Street in Durham, across the railroad tracks, one would see the proud store fronts and bustling enterprises of Durham's black business section. The black middle class was pushing for whatever heights were attainable in a segregated society. The Biltmore Hotel played host to the likes of Cab Calloway, Count Basie, and Bessie Smith. A few doors down, the Bull City Barber Shop catered to the vanities of fashionable folk, and the **Carolina Times** in the next block chronicled the passing events.

This is where the action was—and where Blind Boy Fuller and friends could be found. Possibly Gary Davis just walked around the corner eluding his social worker (always curious if Davis made money on the streets) and taking some time off between his frequent visits at church meetings. Street singing during this time was an art practiced throughout the South by urban blues singers. Although nobody got rich at it, a surprising amount of money could be made by a talented musician. Since the city viewed it as begging, a letter sanctioning the activity was periodically sent from a welfare official to the police chief. For example:

April 8, 1933

Mr. G.W. Proctor
Chief of Police
Durham, N.C.

In re: Fulton Allen (Col.)
606 Cameron Avenue
City

Dear Mr. Proctor:

If it meets with your approval we are glad to recommend that the above named man be allowed to make music on the streets of Durham at a place designed by you.

Assuring you that we are always glad to co-operate with you, I am

Yours very truly,

W.E. Stanley,
Supt. Public Welfare

The sounds of Pettigrew Street are now just an echo. The Biltmore and the Bull City Barber Shop stand in a ghost town peopled by sad, listless drifters. The two block business section survives only as an island destroyed on all sides by urban renewal. And the bulldozers close in on what remains, a typical example of a community's insensitivity to its own cultural heritage. The music created in those two blocks has spread around the world, but the "city fathers" never knew it existed.

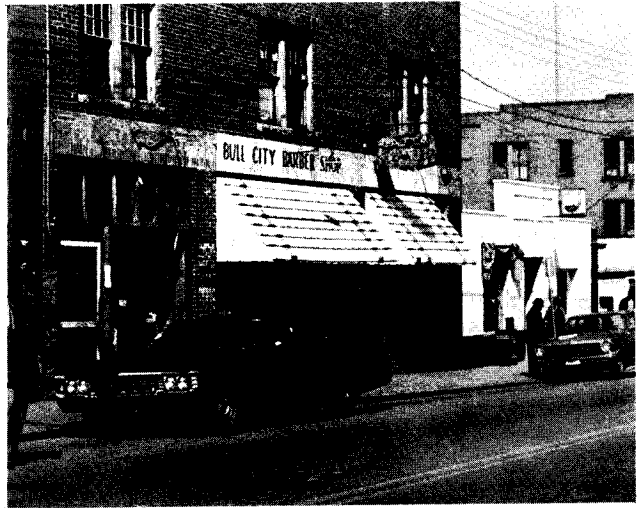


photo by Bill Phillips

Bull City Barber Shop, Pettigrew Street, April, 1974

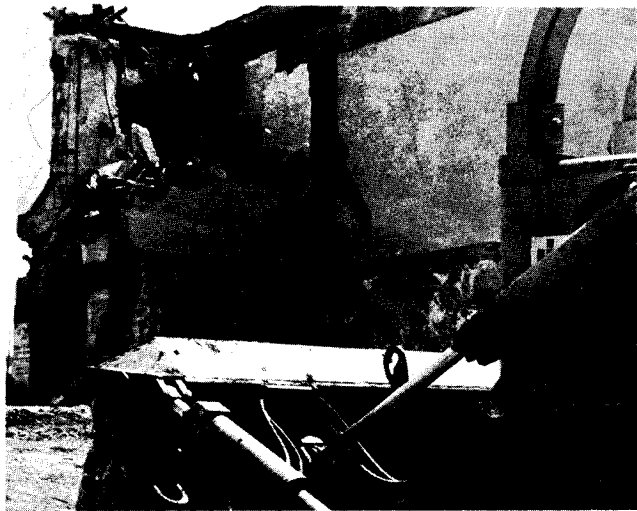


photo by Bill Phillips

Destruction of Pettigrew St., Durham, April, 1974

The Piedmont Blues, 1974

On April 11, 1974, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry returned to North Carolina to give a concert in Chapel Hill, their first in the area in over thirty years. Blind Boy Fuller had died in 1941 following complications from a kidney operation. Sonny Terry, who lived with Fuller and Cora at the time, then teamed up with Brownie McGhee and left for New York, not returning until this year. Before the performance, I took Willie Trice and Cora Allen, Fuller's widow, backstage. McGhee

immediately recognized Trice, who is now in a wheel chair. Cora Allen and Sonny Terry tearfully embraced. Moments later Terry and McGhee played for a large, jubilant audience. After a few numbers, Sonny Terry introduced Willie Trice and Cora Allen, and the audience responded with enthusiastic cheers. Sonny then sang one of Fuller's songs and reminisced about the old days in Durham.

Backstage again, after the performance, the four continued their reunion. McGhee spoke to Trice, "You know Gary died?" Trice said he heard Gary Davis had died of a heart attack in New York in 1972. Two of the great mentors of the Piedmont ragtime blues, Fuller and Davis, had passed on, but this night the sound seemed more alive than ever. McGhee and Terry had just played for a wild audience, and Trice was waiting for the release of two albums and a trip to the National Folk Festival.

Though the Piedmont blues is still alive, it reaches a different people than those who originally song and heard it. There is only a handful of young black performers who have taken an interest in the ragtime blues style. Larry Johnson, performing in the New York area is the best known of these. But the music seems to speak strongly to young whites; most of Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry's audience are white. The music seems to offer a form of expression to whites that is lacking in their own music—a loosening of inhibitions toward expressing some very earthly human feelings of sorrow and joy. It has a yearning and a gutsy cry—something that you can laugh and blush about—which today can speak to and for many different Americans.

Footnotes

1. *Blind Boy Fuller*, Paul Oliver, Blues Classic, Arhoolie Records, Berkeley, Calif.
2. *Reverend Gary Davis*, Stefan Grossman, Yazoo Records, New York City.
3. "If You Lose Your Money," Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, Folkways Records, New York City.
4. "Piccolo Rag," Blind Boy Fuller, Blues Classic, Arhoolie Records.
5. "Big House Bound," Blind Boy Fuller, in *Crying For the Carolinas*, Bruce Bastin, Studio Vista, London.
6. The case was eventually dismissed because Cora Allen would not press charges, and there were no other witnesses to the incident.
7. Bruce Bastin, British blues historian, discovered J. B. Long still living in Burlington and learned the major role he played in the early blues recording of the area.
8. "You Gotta Move," Gary Davis.

9. Elizabeth Cotten, National Folk Festival, Washington, D.C., August, 1973.

10. *The Legendary Rev. Gary Davis*, Biograph Records, Canaan, N.Y.

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Bastin, Bruce. *Crying for the Carolinas*. November Books Limited, London, England, 1971.

Oliver, Paul. *The Story of the Blues*. Chilton Book Company, N.Y., N.Y., 1969.

Blind Boy Fuller, Blues Classic 11, Arhoolie Records, P.O. Box 9195, Berkeley, Calif. 94709.

Reverend Gary Davis, 1935-1939. Yazoo Records (L-1023), 54 King Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10004.

The Legendary Rev. Gary Davis. Biograph (BLP-12030), P.O. Box 109, Canaan, N.Y. 12029.

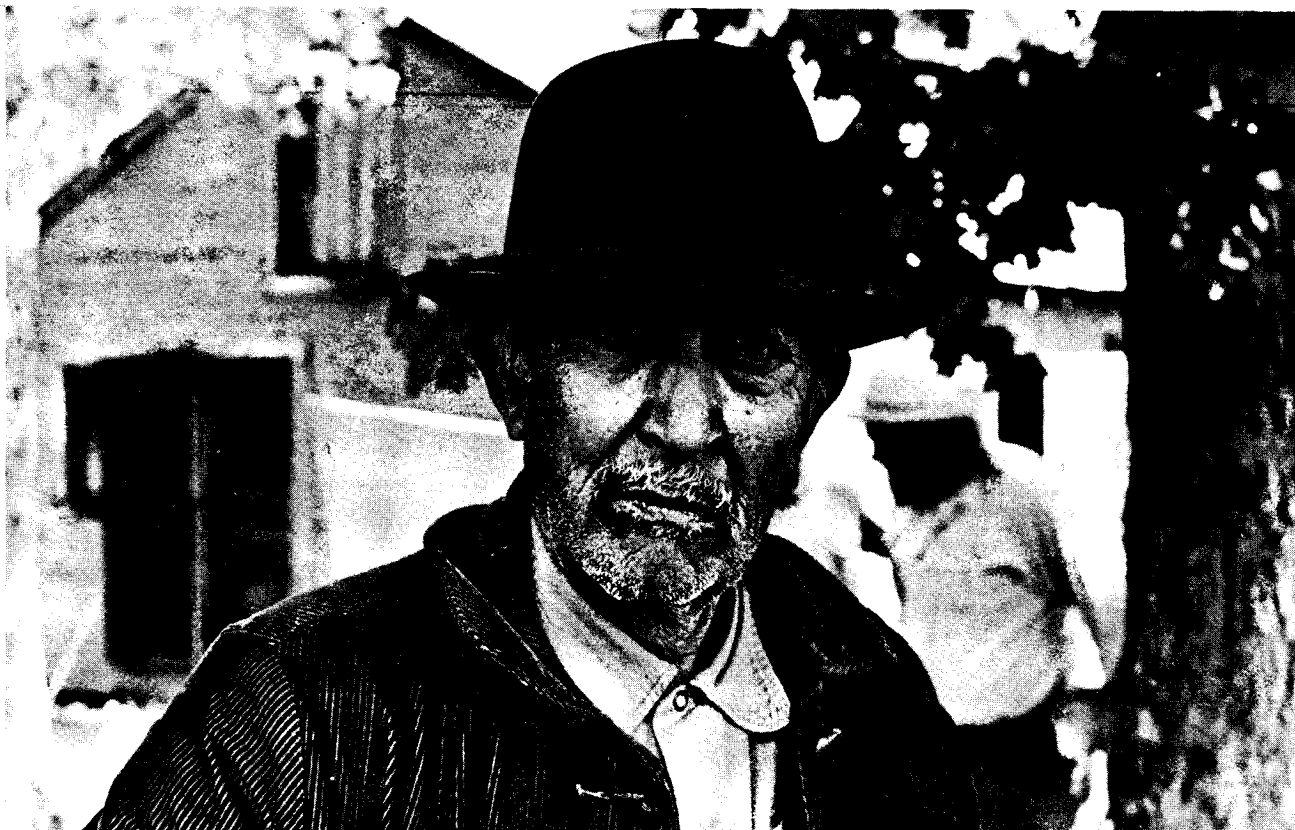
Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry Sing. Folkways (FW-2327), 701 Seventh Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10014.

Willie Trice, Trix Records, New York.



"Photo by Bill Boyarsky"

**Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee in Concert,
Chapel Hill, N.C., April, 1974**



Dink Roberts

talking banjo

by Cecelia Conway and Tommy Thompson

Bruce Bastin's *Crying for the Carolinas* (1971) demonstrated the continued existence of the Piedmont blues tradition which has produced such notables as Blind Boy Fuller and Gary Davis (discussed in Bill Phillips's article herein). Bruce's fieldwork in the Piedmont also led to the discovery of several survivors of an earlier Afro-American musical tradition. Bruce introduced us to John Snipes, a banjo player, and to Kip Lornell, a young field worker who led us to John's sister, Mary Poteat. Mary also plays the banjo and may once have been the best of those whom we have visited. Again thanks to Kip, we were able to meet Joe and Odell Thompson, cousins, who play fiddle and banjo together in a style suggestive of the Appalachian string bands. Kip also tracked down James Phillips "Dink" Roberts, a banjoist and guitarist some eighty years old, who has lived in Alamance County, North Carolina, most of his life. Bill Phillips directed us to Dink's home in January, 1974, and since then Dink and his family have allowed us to record many hours of music and conversation on sound tape, video tape, and film. The interview below is

excerpted from a lengthier conversation with Dink, his wife Lily, and son James, on February 21, 1974.

The existence of these pre-blues musicians is of some importance to the student of southern musical culture. The banjo, or some proto-banjo, is almost universally believed to have been brought to the New World by African slaves. Early written references to the banjo indicate its presence in the upper Piedmont in the 18th century and it spread to the deep South somewhat later. According to Thomas Jefferson, the "banjar" was "an instrument proper to the blacks which they brought hither from Africa" (*Notes on Virginia*). Several black banjoists (and to our knowledge, no whites) are depicted in the late 18th and early 19th century American painting. Most of the instruments shown have three or five strings, one shorter than the others, and appear to be prototypical of the five-string banjo more recently "proper to" the Anglo-American mountaineer. It is evident that the instrument passed from blacks to whites in the last century. Little or nothing is known, however, about the styles and repertoire which surely made this

same passage.

Among the mysteries which cloud this musical exchange are those surrounding the origins of technique. For example, one of the most common traditional methods for sounding the banjo involves striking down (i.e., towards the instrument) on one or more strings with the nail of the right forefinger. This method is known as "knocking," "rapping," "frailing," etc., and has many regional and individual variants. Along the Blue Ridge in southwestern Virginia and northwestern North Carolina where it is most fully and artistically realized, this is called "clawhammer banjo." The down-picking technique has no clear antecedent in European music and would appear to be of African or Afro-American origin. This speculation, vague as it may be, is consistent with the fact that all four black banjoists we have visited employ this method of playing. Since they all learned from Piedmont blacks whose musical lives extended well back into the last century, it is fairly certain that the development of down-picking predates the banjo's currency in the mountains. Still all our informants share characteristics of style rather specific to the clawhammer region of the Blue Ridge.

The data which will prove black invention of the clawhammer style has yet to be gathered, and such matters may never be satisfactorily settled. Be that as it may, we can safely say that, with few exceptions, every truly vigorous American musical idiom has drawn from roots among black musicians of the Southeast. We are fortunate to have met and learned from Dink Roberts, his family and his contemporaries. There are doubtless many more such musicians scattered across the South waiting for folklorists and oral historians to come knocking.

Most of Dink's early memories are housed in oft-repeated anecdotes, one or another of which usually serves to answer any question about the past. Like other forms of folk narrative, these memories possess some constancy of wording and structure in their retelling. Certain characteristics of Dink's speech, its rhythmic cadences and two-fold repetition of phrases, find their way into his songs, and are of a piece with the patterns which crystallized in the country blues.

Dink is a skilled, sometimes inspired, performer and apparently his music once commanded great respect in his community. He plays finger-style (up-picking) as well as clawhammer banjo and the slide guitar with a pocket knife. His performances are casual; his tunes possess little internal structure, and his verses migrate freely from song to song. He often incorporates commentary and explanation into his songs without breaking stride. Lily sometimes accompanies his singing, and she and James are excellent dancers.

The conversation picks up with a discussion of two members of the band Dink played in, George White (another banjo player) and John Arch Thompson (a fiddler and Joe Thompson's father). They played for dancing ("hands up eight"), sometimes as often as six nights a week—three for blacks and three for whites.

Cece: Did John Arch Thompson and George White learn from you?

Dink: I learned from them. See, they old, way older than me. I'm 79. God has blessed me. That's the truth. Going now [to play] in a few minutes. Gonna drink this one. Y'all ain't in no hurry?

Tommy: No. Did you learn from your uncle, too?

Dink: Yeah, I learned from my uncle, man raised us, George Roberts. Weren't but three of us. My mother died when I was nine years old. He took us and raised us. Weren't but three of us, and he treated us all alike, and it didn't make no difference between his'n and us. That's the truth. [He] had eight children. They played [music], too.

James: That thing ain't taping now, is it?

T: Yeah. We want to tape the whole family history, not just the music. (General laughter).

D: Now if I had a guitar, him [James] could play a guitar. Right over there, that boy. He can go on a guitar. He knows them new pieces. I don't know nothing but old pieces. I used to play guitar. I never will forget it. My second wife [Jewel], she bought me a guitar, brand new guitar, and I never will forget it long as I live. I said, "Well." And she said, "Now you ain't gonna open it 'til Christmas morning." I said, "You know I know old Santa." She said, "Yeah, but I'm not gonna let you take it out 'til Christmas morning." Well, Burch's Bridge, my brother-in-law lived across over there. Moon shining bright as day. There's two men, white men, and two white women—I'm telling you the God's truth—says "Uncle," says "How about playing that piece you was a coming down the road playing a while ago." I said, "I just got a guitar for Christmas," and I says, "Old lady didn't want me to take it 'til Christmas morning." And I said, "Well, you know I know old Santa Claus," like you know. And I was playing "Careless Love." [They] said, "Well, I'll tell you what I'll do if you just play the piece coming down the hill there." And they had liquor and everything. Had a little old paper cup. Say, "Ya have a drink friend?" And I said, "Too much raised to 'fuse it!'" I'm telling you I played two tunes, and they handed me

Cecelia Conway is writing her dissertation in folklore for a Ph.D. in English at the University of North Carolina. Tommy Thompson teaches philosophy at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, and plays banjo with the Red Clay Ramblers. Field work for this article was undertaken in conjunction with a Student Initiated Bicentennial project with Ms. Conway, Cheney Hales and Virginia Hill, under grants from the Bicentennial Council of the Thirteen Original States, the N.C. American Revolution Bicentennial Comm., N.C. Dept. of Administration in cooperation with the N.C. Internship Office and the Southern Regional Education Board. The project includes a 16mm film by Conway and Hales on Dink Roberts, and is available by writing them at 1720 Allard Road, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

Special thanks to Leonard Rogoff for the photographs and to Eugenia Ahart for transcribing the recordings.

six bucks. That's the truth. But I could play then; I can't play now.

C and T: Aw, sure can.

J: That beer makin' him talk ain't it. Get another one, he'll be right, won't he.

C: Did you ever hear a piece about someone named Riley?

D: Riley?

T: Breaking out of prison. [In some versions of "Old Rattler," Riley escapes from tracking pursuers by wearing his shoes backwards.]

D: Use to play it, but can't play it now. Played it for a fellow—he's dead and gone now. He was a good man walked on, in two shoes. But he didn't give a dog. Walt Weaver was a good man as walked in two shoes, but he didn't give a dog. He use to go to school on a jackass, just a jackass. Now, I don't mean no harm by saying that. But he'd get on a jackass and ride it plum through school ground. That's right. (Laughter) . . . for fun, just for fun. Dead and gone now. Good a man as walked in two shoes. Just mischievous, just mischievous.

J: Did everything in the book. He could dance, too. I learned to dance from him.

D: Talk about buck dance,
he could go,
he could go.
He was a white fellow
but he could go.

Well, getting bout right now. Old banjo done got dusty and everything. I been telling James and them, "tighten it

up and everything." But, just don't want to do it. [Tunes his banjo]

C: In that Riley song, did Riley get away?

D: (Laughs) Yeah, Riley got away He could go.

C: Do you remember where you learned it?

D: Ah, Lord knows it's been so long. Don't know now how long it be. My memories ain't like they use to be.

[Dink plays "Laid Poor Jesse in His Grave." He learned this song from his brother Johnny Roberts who was much older than he. As well as learning from George Roberts, the great uncle who raised him, Dink played and learned from George's children. The first piece he heard from his family and the piece he learned was the "Fox Chase." He played that one next for us. "Roustabout," a song known in the Blue Ridge Mountains, was the third one that Dink played.]

T: What does "roustabout" mean?

D: Well, I just don't know It means a whole lot but I just don't know the meaning of it, you know. I tell you, I learned them old pieces lookin' at the other people play. I had the music on my mind, you know. I'd go to town and hear somebody playing, you know. Walk up— I'd say, "I'll play that." Get out to yourself, you get out to yourself and you can play it. But if you get with someone else and—they cut you off.

T: Right. Lily, I'm glad you made it back.

Lily: Yeah, I'm back. Stuff was high in Byrd's today. Took every one of them there tickets to get groceries.



Dink and Lily Roberts

Thirty-one dollars—that left me with nothing.

C: For the rest of the month?

L: That's the truth—I'll have some next month. [To Dink] I got you some bacca but I can't get you no snuff.

[Dink plays "John Lover's Gone." This title and some of the verses are also known in the mountains.]

John lover's gone;

John lover's gone to war.

John lover's gone;

Ain't that lucky, too?

Yeah, Momma told me

Some folks say the Devil's dead,

But I saw the Devil the other day

Kickin' up the dust to get away.

Danville's

Yeah, who been here since I been gone?

Little bitty girl with a red dress on.

She can do that trick all night long.

(Dink laughs)

Yeah, my Momma told me 'fore she died

She gonna buy me a rollin' hill.

Some folks say the Devil's dead;

Caught the Devil the other day over in Danville.

He kickin' dust way over in Danville.

Oh, lord, . . .

C: Where did you learn that one, Dink?

D: Lord, that's been years and years ago. I used to go to parties and things. The other man been playin' the banjo. When I'd walk in the house he'd lay his banjo down. Give it to me.

C: Since you were the one who could play best.

D: Yeah. Be in a room about like this here, and ah—He'd come in; he'd be playin' the banjo. I'd come in with mine, he'd lay the banjo down. Then he'd go to frolickin'—you know "hands up eight?" That's right! Wouldn't be a cross word said. But now you carelesome now, somebody get killed. (Laughter) That's the truth. That's the God's truth.

L: Lord no. You can go to a ball game

D: Up to my fingers and down to my toes,

Where many quarts and gallons goes.

Boys, if I don't drink it all, you can have some.

I played with John Arch [Thompson]—he was an old man like me—[for] gatherings and frolics and things like that.

C: Square dances?

D: "Hands up eight and don't be late." George White played banjo [like me]. Everybody plays music got a different sound. He could go. He married my first cousin, George White did. Oh Lord, [we played] in different places, different places. In people's houses, people's houses.

T: When you played one set did you change tunes while people were dancing? [According to Dink and John Snipes, a set could last a full hour!]

D: No. Run a set—you play one piece for that set. They get up another set, you play another piece. Lily dances so—

C: When was the first time you saw Lily dance?

D: She knowed my first wife [Sara]. She did, that's the truth. Did you see her picture? I married and married again. I had three women and all of them sweet and everything, but the Lord knows best.

*"Everybody that plays music
got a different sound."*



Dink and his son, James.



NOBEL PRIZE WINNER PURGED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS

by Ronnie Dugger

In 1926, in one of the laboratories at the University of Texas in Austin, a scientist conducted experiments that would eventually win him the Nobel Prize, but not before his fame and his politics made him a problem for a university whose most liberal supporters would not defend him. Biologist Hermann J. Muller discovered quite painfully that by the mid-thirties, the university's vaunted faith in the free enterprise of the mind did not protect, in his case, the right to challenge the free enterprise of the market.

In the fall of 1925, Muller, a New Yorker born of cultured European immigrants, was made a full professor at UT. In his lab, he exposed the fruit fly, *drosophila*, to X rays and discovered that this produced in them 150 times as many genetic mutations as occur naturally. He delivered this sensational news to the scientific community at the International Genetics Congress in Berlin: Genes could be changed by radiation, a fact with great beneficial potentialities for mankind and of great menace, too, as we have learned in our subsequent time. The American Association for the Advancement of Science gave him its annual award for the greatest contribution to knowledge in a given year, and he was elected to the National Academy of Sciences.

A rationalist and a political visionary, he believed that cooperation, not self-interest, should be the dominant principle of social organization, that only in a cooperative society can the human species achieve its highest realizations. He took leave from the Texas faculty, and between 1933 and 1937 he carried on his work in Moscow, ultimately as senior geneticist at the Soviet Academy of Sciences' Institute of Genetics and a consultant at the Medicobiological Institute there.

In 1937 he did pioneering work in blood transfusions during the Spanish Civil War.

Here was an adventurous scientist, an adventurous thinker, and an adventurous man, but his University of Texas was an ordinary Southern-Southwestern place where cultural and moral conservatisms were the weapons that were used to enforce a profound prejudice against adventure. H.Y. Benedict, who became the university's president in 1927, believed, and said he believed, that a teacher should live by the personal standards expected of a preacher.¹ Charles Ramsdell, a writer whose father was teaching at UT in the thirties, recalls Benedict telling once, at the Ramsdells' home, about the firing of some professors from the university because they had had some girls posing nude for a life-drawing class. Benedict had laughed as he said the professors had temporarily misplaced their sense of geography. An anonymous but well-written publication of the period and place recorded:

"The University of Texas is in many ways a microcosm of the state—a vast, amorphous, gelatinous sort of institution, where skeptical professors of philosophy and cynical workers in the sciences rub elbows with Baptists who believe that a smoking hell lies three miles underneath their brogans. It is populated, yearly, by some six thousand bewildered boys and girls who are far less interested in the chase after the Higher Learning than in the pursuit of their own adoles-

This article by Ronnie Dugger, founding editor of the *Texas Observer*, is excerpted from his forthcoming book, *Our Invaded Universities, Form, Reform, and New Starts, A Nonfiction Play for Five Stages*, published by W.W. Norton, Inc. ©Ronnie Dugger 1974.

cent amours. Plucked from the bayous, the buck-brush, and the bulrushes of this farflung commonwealth and dispatched to the Pierian Spring, they decline almost unanimously to drink of the founts of learning. They would rather see a football game. They would rather go to a movie. They would rather make passes at their girl friends.

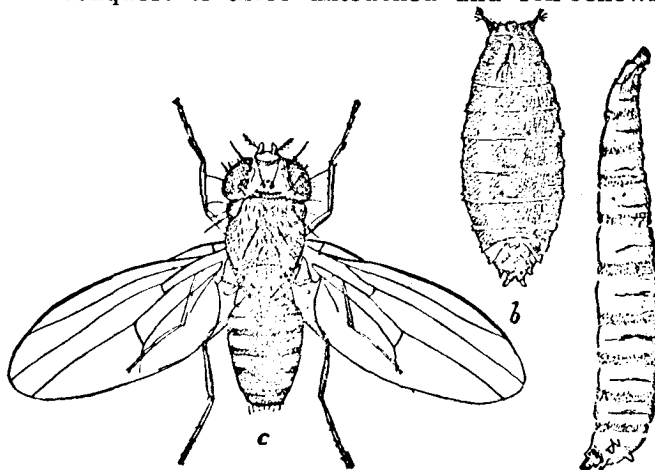
"This, however, can be no account of intramural and adolescent lechery, as is the manner of collegiate novels, for the boys make their passes to a large part in vain. It is characteristic of the nubile Anglo-Saxoness to teeter in tremulous delight on the marge of her Rubicon but seldom to get her feet wet. And a University town is certainly no advantageous area wherein a Casanova may ply his craft. He can not lure a co-ed into a hotel, for there he will assuredly be recognized. He can not take her to his boarding house or his fraternity, for the place is swarming with witnesses—no less with putative competitors. He can not take her to his apartment, for his allowance is such that he can ill afford the proper sort of quarters. He can lead her forth into the cedar brakes, but it were a hardy lass indeed who would surrender her innocence in the midst of a briar patch or cedar thicket.

"Your student, therefore, must in the main content himself with such adolescent vices as penny ante, necking parties, and the surreptitious consumption of unpalatable alcoholic stimulants. In such an environment it is not to be wondered at that few students achieve either fame or notoriety. They are too much alike one another." ²

Now Hermann Muller (according to Ramsdell, who took a course from him) was "a gentle, dedicated man." Mrs. Clarence Ayres, the wife of a young new professor of economics at UT in those years, remembers him. "He was a very shy sort of person—They used to laugh at him—He used to wear a lead apron." One of his leading students, Dr. Sarah Bedichek Pipkin (now chairwoman of zoology at Howard University) says, "He was a very great man and a very kind man." Historian Walter Webb regarded him as "very childlike" and "nothing more than just a liberal." ³ However, he had gone to Moscow, and in 1935 there appeared in the United States his book, *Out of the Night*, on the title page of which he was identified as a professor of biology at the University of Texas and in Moscow and in the preface to which he wrote about "the great and solid actualities of collective achievement which are becoming increasingly evident in that one section of the world—the Soviet Union—in which the fundamental changes in the economic basis have already been established."

Muller was convinced that the human race can and should control its own evolution and improvement through genetics. "Man," he said, "must eventually take his own fate into his own hands, biologically, as well as otherwise, and not be content to remain in his most essential respect, the cat's paw of natural forces, to be fashioned, played with, and cast aside." ⁴ But this could not come to pass, he believed, as long as society is so organized that the people are reduced to dependence on "a relatively few great industrial enterprises." In his book he endorsed "the change from the profit system to socialization," looked forward to "the downfall of dogmatic theology," depreciated "the commandments of a supposed supernatural dictator," and advocated eventual artificial insemination to reproduce "a vast number of children" with "the characteristics of some transcendently estimable man." In a century or two, he said (as if speaking of tomorrow), the majority of the population could "become of the innate quality of such men as Lenin, Newton, Leonardo, Pasteur, Beethoven, Omar Khayyam, Buddha, Sun Yat Sen, Marx . . . or even to possess their varied faculties combined." His judgment on Russia, his respect for Lenin and Marx as great men, his eugenics incredibly bold for his time, ⁵ surely consigned his book to obscurity, but his pages of astonishing prophecy on energy sources alone established, we now may see, his genius:

"The transmission and direction of power are still in their early stages. . . . practically inexhaustible physical sources of power surround us which are as yet undeveloped because of our present preoccupation with fossil combustibles and with water. These sources include the sunlight direct, wind, waves, rain, the tides, the subterranean heat, perhaps even earth motions, and—though most problematically of all—the forces in the interior of the atom nucleus. The conquest of these untouched and self-renewing



Drosophila ampelophila : a, larva ; b, pupa ; c, adult.

supplies of power represents one of the most alluring fields of future endeavor. . . .

"Deserts will be flooded and irrigated, jungles subjugated, rivers and ocean currents diverted and controlled, forests placed, climate (in critical places) modified, and the earth in general made far more habitable, healthful, beautiful, and productive. Even the surface of the sea . . . must in some form be made to yield to the service of man the vast energy it constantly receives and wastes, and its great potentialities of food. Nature in general must be reconstructed by us for ourselves, on an ever grander scale." 6

In 1936 President Benedict, with the regents' approval, in effect fired Muller. The fact is so little known most of his colleagues deny it happened; even Dr. Pipkin, who continued to be close to him, says she is sure he resigned. After he left UT she occupied his office—he left most of his stuff right there—and she remembers the day when it was announced in the lab that he had resigned and would not be returning.

The transcript of a later legislative hearing on academic freedom at UT contains a glimpse into the case. J.R. Parten, the liberal chairman of the school's regents in the late thirties, was defending a New Deal professor of economics some legislators had wanted fired on grounds that he was a socialist or worse. As an argument that the university was responsible, Parten volunteered to the legislators, "Now if a charge is true you should fire the person. We fired one of the most distinguished men on the campus. I doubt if any of you ever heard about it. We didn't have to fire him; the evidence developed by President Benedict was laid before him and then [he] was told, 'You are going to have to be tried if you come back,' and he elected to stay away, a member of [the] American Academy of Science[s] at the time." 7 No one asked who the man was, but a third of a century after the event Parten says, "I was referring to Dr. Hermann Muller."

The "evidence developed by President Benedict" was the charge that Muller had violated a regents' rule by contributing to a student publication that did not have administration approval. The salient fact about the publication was that it was deemed to be Marxist: That is why, one may fairly conjecture, it did not have approval. Obviously Muller had also become a leading geneticist for Communist Russia, but this does not appear to have violated any of the regents' rules at the time.

"Actually," Parten states, "the fact that he had participated in the publication and circulation of a Marxist pamphlet on the campus in violation of the rules caused Dr. Benedict to write Dr. Muller a

letter, while he was on a year's leave of absence in Russia, informing him that he would be tried before his peers when he returned to the campus and advising him not to return. I suppose technically it could be argued that he was not actually fired, but removed from the faculty by reason of his failure to return from Russia. However, in effect, he was fired."

Benedict, says Parten, was impeccably honest, a dedicated man, and a persistent defender of academic freedom with whom the only issue was the violation of the rule. "Benny had most of the board about convinced that there was nothing in the world wrong with teaching the theory of communism on the campus," Parten recalls. The president would argue that communism was in the world, and the university couldn't do anything about it—but, Benedict would say, " 'I recognize that reasonable rules of regents that prescribe against teaching subversion on the campus have got to be respected.' " One rule required that any publications produced on the campus had to be made known to the administration.

Parten remembers, "Muller was a distinguished man, probably the most distinguished man we had on the campus. Benedict came to the board one day and he said, 'I've got to confess to you that our friend Muller is in trouble, because he has been definitely found contributing to publishing such and such a document contrary to the rules. As distinguished as he is, he can't come back without facing trial by his peers.' "

Parten does not think Muller's being in Moscow at the time made things different. In any case, the board, on April 27, 1936, unanimously accepted Muller's resignation. Parten remembers well the distress the matter gave Benedict. "You could tell it hurt him. It hurt him very deeply." 8

Later in 1937 Dr. Pipkin ran into Muller in London. He had recently become a professor in Edinburg and conveyed to her a distaste for what was going on in Russia. He asked her, while they were in an elevator, if she remembered one of their colleagues, who had been with him in Moscow. She did. "Well," Muller said, "they shot him."

In 1946, for the work he had done at Texas in 1926, Muller was given the Nobel Prize. He had by then returned to the United States, where he continued working at Amherst and the University of Indiana. In 1948 he resigned his membership in the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union because of Russia's imposition of the doctrine of its scientists that acquired skills are transmitted genetically. 9 In an open letter to the Russian Academy of Sciences published in the fall of that year in *Science*, he said the Communist party in

Russia "holds workers and intellectuals alike in fear and subjection" and the Soviet system was "like a giant spiderweb." With the elevation of Lysenko, Stalin's pet geneticist, in 1936, Muller reported, a series of attacks on geneticists began, forced confessions were exacted, and "many geneticists whose memory I hold dear . . . lost their lives in unexplained ways."

Julian Huxley called Muller "the greatest living geneticist . . . the most original and all-around biologist now in existence."¹⁰ One sees, from an article Muller wrote in 1958, that his fundamental views, which were concerned with humanity as a natural species and how we may be able to survive and extend ourselves, had not changed much through his life. Values, he wrote, are determined by the same evolutionary processes that determine the other characteristics of the species and should be studied as dispassionately and scientifically as anything else. All of the more successful social systems emphasized the importance of service to others and of values like veracity, integrity, self-control, industry, and courage which make that service more effective. Ecstatic emotional attachments to one's group and its leader have been superseded slowly by "doctrines of brotherhood among all mankind," and now, he said, "Each man must ever more strongly identify himself with humanity in general." Among his values he listed cooperative behavior, the pursuit of truth for its own sake, the fulfillment of love, and "the zest for making one's own decisions (that is, for the exercise of freedom)." It is our business, he said, "to take intelligence and cooperation as much farther as we can. . . . we can increasingly avoid the missteps of blind nature, circumvent its cruelties, reform our own natures, and enhance our values."¹¹

A simple man, perhaps, and just a liberal, so much a creature of his culture, it is said that once he tried to take his life and wandered alone in the hills for days because his wife was attracted to another; but Hermann Muller fulfilled his ideal for a life, taking intelligence and cooperation a little further along by the work that he did.

When, in 1967, he was dying at his home in Indiana, the X ray equipment he had used in his research at the University of Texas in 1926 was displayed on the first floor of the experimental science building there.¹² As you walked through the corridor in the base of the school's 27-story Tower, some of his published works, exhibited in one of the glass cases on the wall of the hallway, might have caught your eye. The university had fired its only Nobel winner under a rule to control what may be thought and said, but the exhibit was

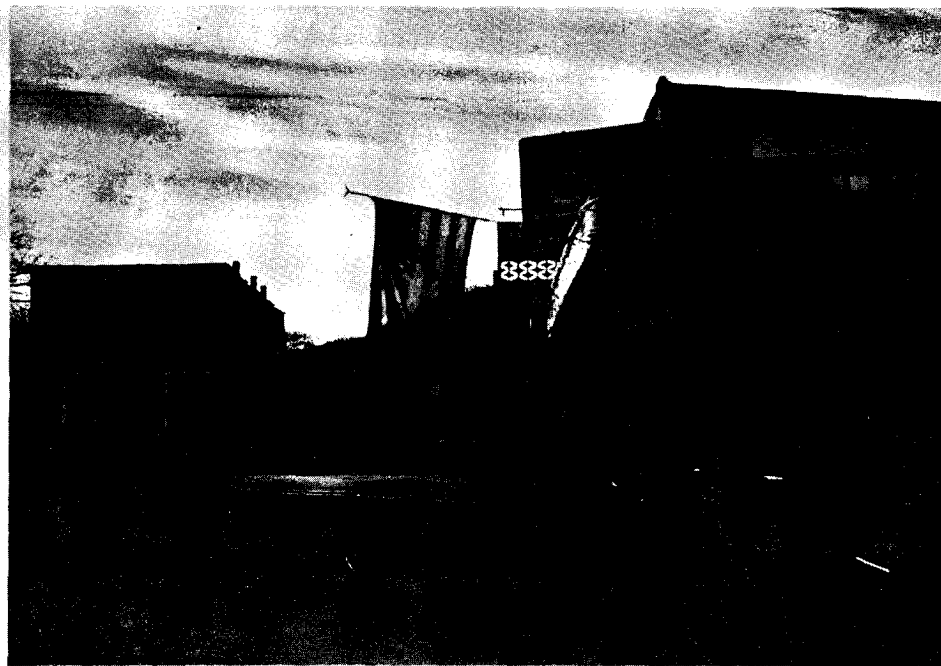
entitled:

DR. H.J. MULLER
TEXAS' NOBEL LAUREATE

Reflecting on what happened to Muller and others at UT, Roy Bedichek, a naturalist who ran the Texas Interscholastic League for the university, said, "I've noticed that when the matter of academic freedom comes up, that it's always the brilliant men who are fired first. You can see it right in the history of the university."¹³

Footnotes

1. *UT Bulletin No. 2843*, Nov. 15, 1928.
2. Anon., *Texas Merry-Go-Round*, pp. 75-76.
3. Interview, Charles Ramsdell, Durham, N.C., Jan. 1972; interview, Mrs. Clarence Ayres, Austin, Sept. 22, 1972; interview, Dr. Sarah Bedichek Pipkin, Washington, D.C., fall 1971; transcript of a coversation between Walter Webb and Roy Bedichek, Aug. 18, 1953, made available by William A. Owens.
4. This one sentence comes from the *Daily Texan*, Apr. 28, 1936.
5. Muller was enough enclosed by the culture of his time that he seemed to have given no thought to such multiplications of great women, too, but at least he resisted any presumption that women would have to be required to take into their bodies artificially such precious seed. "How many women," he wrote, "in an enlightened community devoid of superstitious taboos and of sex slavery, would be eager and proud to bear and rear a child of Lenin or of Darwin! Is it not obvious that restraint, rather than compulsion would be called for? . . .
6. Hermann J. Muller, *Out of the Night* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1935), pp. vii, 40, 59-63, 107, 108, 111, 113, 122, 126.
7. *Investigation of University of Texas by Senate Investigating Committee*, hearings held in the Texas Senate chamber, Austin, Nov. 16-28, 1944, 4 vols.; vol. 3, p. 542.
8. Letter, J.R. Parten to R.D., Dec. 21, 1971; interviews, J.R. Parten, Dec. 31, 1971, and Nov. 1, 1972; regents' minutes, Apr. 27, 1936.
9. See *Dallas Morning News*, editorial, Oct. 31, 1948.
10. H.J. Muller, *Studies in Genetics: Selected Papers of H.J. Muller* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962), esp. pp. 550-59.
11. Hermann Muller, "The Survival of the Finest," *Saturday Review*, May 5, 1958.
12. *Daily Texan*, Mar. 24, 1967; see also, *Daily Texan*, Apr. 11, 1967.
13. William Owens, *Three Friends: Bedichek, Dobie, Webb* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), p. 63.



ACORN ORGANIZING IN ARKANSAS

by Wade Rathke

Tied to both the South and the West, Arkansas is a land of mixed identities. Each spring rice, cotton, and soybeans transform the eastern part of the state into a thriving delta, but the Mississippi River separates this rich farmland from the deep South. The Ozarks can claim scenic hills and Saturday night square dances, but they lack the regional mountain culture of Appalachia. The cowboy hats in Ft. Smith seem distant echoes of the Texas plains. Neither Cajun, oil-rich Louisiana to the south nor border-state Missouri to the north offer a sense of kinship.

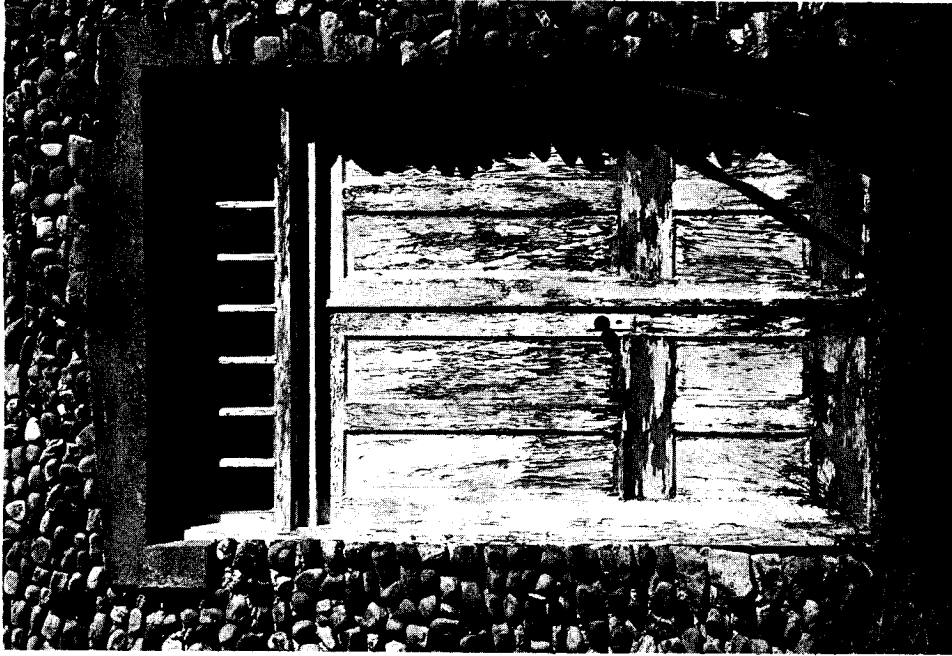
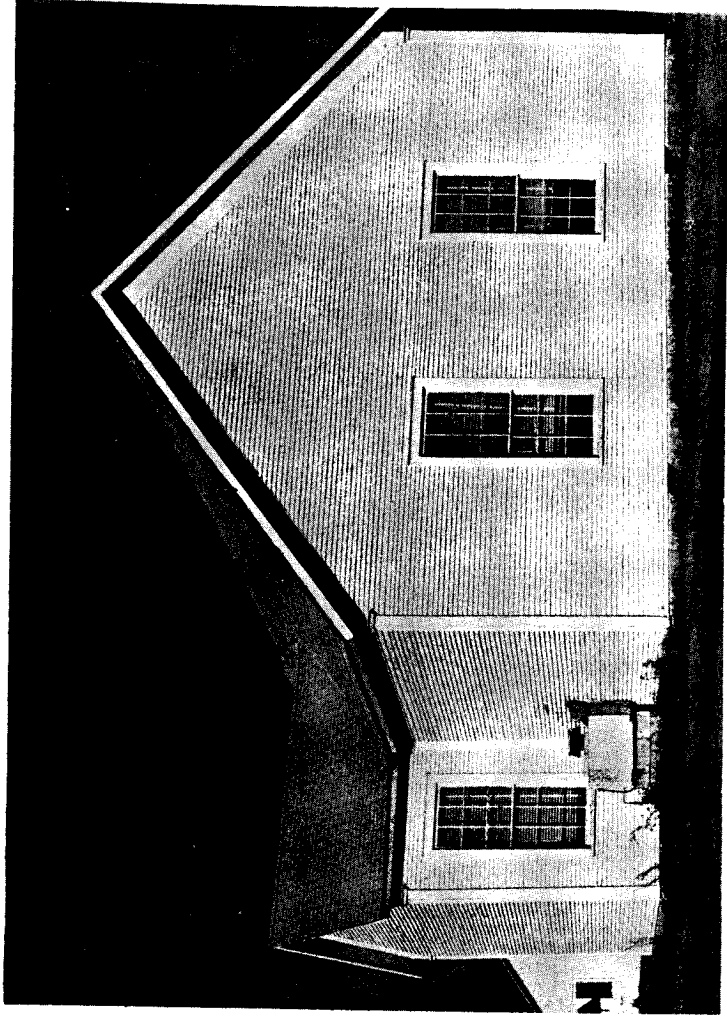
Politicians like John McClellan, Wilbur Mills, William Fulbright, and Dale Bumpers wield significant power in national counsels. But working Arkansans exercise little control over the life of their own state, despite its 1836 motto, "The People Shall Rule." Aluminum companies, milk producers, oil and timber companies, powerful utilities, and the remnants of a plantation system maintain hegemony over the rich resources of Arkansas. Meanwhile, seventy per cent of the state's households still exist on less than \$7,000 a year.

Arkansas' history has been punctuated by erratic political action against these controlling forces. The 1930's produced a unique indigenous union organizing effort when the Southern Tenant Farmers Union sprang from the discontent of the Depression; but the boldness of the STFU's inter-

racial struggle against the cotton lords surpassed its actual lasting gains. Huey Long's "Share the Wealth" clubs found a strong, but short-lived following. Though Little Rock was internationally famous for its school desegregation problems, the civil rights movement never established viable organizations in Arkansas. And unions have yet to secure a solid foothold in this "right-to-work" state.

By the late 1960's, Arkansas was an organizational vacuum. Moreover, grass-roots organizing had reached a state of uncertainty throughout the country. Saul Alinsky's efforts in Chicago, Rochester, Buffalo, and Providence produced short-term victories, but lacked long-term structures for continual change. The welfare rights movement was stymied as the flat grant system, the primary point of leverage, was incorporated into the social service budget by several state legislatures. Cesar Chavez was making progress, but no one knew how to transfer the power of secondary boycotts to

A former welfare-rights organizer in New England, Wade Rathke has been the "chief organizer" and inspiration behind Arkansas Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) since its inception. This article was written with the editorial assistance of Bill Finger, a former ACORN organizer, and Cary Fowler. Photographs are by Raiford Ragsdale/Nexus Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia.





Photographs of Arkansas
by
Raiford Ragsdale/Nexus

neighborhood organizations. And other organizing models from earlier Populist and Progressive eras had been discarded.

Out of a need for change in Arkansas and a search for a new grass-roots organizing model, Arkansas Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) was established in 1970. ACORN drew on the unique experience of the STFU, established a membership dues system similar to unions, and defined its efforts statewide like welfare rights organizations. This statewide organization consisted of local neighborhood-based groups in the Alinsky tradition, planned for alternative service centers based in these groups, as with the Community Service Organization in California, and depended on large numbers of skilled organizers to work for change, as did the North Dakota Non-Partisan League during the Progressive era.

In the four years since its inception, ACORN has maintained this eclectic blend of political strategies and has grown into a significant grass-roots organizing model for the South and the nation. ACORN now has forty-three affiliated community groups throughout the state and 4700 member families. Regional offices have been established in Little Rock, Ft. Smith, Pine Bluff, Fayetteville, Jonesboro, plus a membership service center in North Little Rock. ACORN membership crosses race, class, sex, and occupational lines but remains within that 70 per cent of Arkansans whose income is less than \$7,000 a year.

ACORN members belong to local groups that fight local issues: poor school bus transportation in Fort Smith, the quality of health care offered to senior citizens in Springdale, blockbusting in the transitional Oak Forest neighborhood in Little Rock, the Wilbur Mills Expressway running through the backyards of several groups in Little Rock, and many others. At the same time, ACORN community organizations join forces in broader actions. Members lobby in the state legislature, monitor administrative decisions and regulatory commissions, and sit on boards of social service delivery systems. The central staff coordinates research, shares expertise among groups, and supports the organizers in the field.

ACORN has demonstrated that people organized on the local level can solve community problems, can control local elections, and can affect public policy on the state level. But what about problems that are rooted beyond a neighborhood or beyond the state? Recently, ACORN has felt the growing pains that any model must experience. Drawing on the proven method of forming a local affiliate around discontent, ACORN's structure has stretched beyond Arkansas into the centers of national power for the first time.

Fighting A.P.&L.

Redfield is a small town in Jefferson County in southeastern Arkansas, not unlike the hundreds of rural communities which dot Arkansas and the South. But Redfield has become much more than a wide spot in the road to the people of Arkansas, to ACORN, and to the Arkansas Power and Light Company. AP&L, with its parent holding company, Middle South Utilities, sees near Redfield the future site of one of the world's largest power plants, a gargantuan complex with 75-story smoke stacks thrust into the sky. At \$850 million, it will be the largest single private investment undertaken in the state. The coal-burning steam facility will generate 2,800 megawatts of electricity per hour, doubling the company's present capacity. Three 100-car trainloads of strip-mined coal from Kerr-McGee and Peabody mines in Wyoming will roll into Redfield each day to fire the plant's generators.

Were electricity the only product of the "White Bluffs" plant, as AP&L has dubbed it, Redfield citizens would doubtless already be accustomed to the rumble of bulldozers and earth-moving machines preparing the construction site. The coal, however, will do more than send electricity through the wires; it will also push 178,000 tons of sulfur dioxide out of the smoke stacks each year. Downwind from the plant lies some of the richest farm land in Arkansas. The rice, soybean and cotton stands found there are among the crops most susceptible to sulfur damage, yet AP&L has made no plans to install sulfur controls at White Bluffs.

The developing controversy over construction of the plant reveals ACORN's unique structure and approach. Initial reaction to the planned generating facility was favorable. Certainly it would bring new jobs, more industry, and a powerful lift to a sleepy economy characterized by the third poorest school district in the state. As reports of potential pollution levels and other deleterious aspects of the plant became public, local citizens grew apprehensive and angry. The Jefferson County Improvement Organization, an ACORN affiliate whose previous focus had been the poor conditions in the schools, turned to ACORN for help in discovering more about AP&L's plans for Redfield.

ACORN began organizing farmers in the vicinity of the plant. In the farmland areas of Plum Bayou, Ferda, Tucker, and England, hundreds of farmers began joining two new ACORN affiliates, Protect Our Land Association (POLA) and Save Our Health and Property (SHAP). In Little Rock and Pine Bluff, ACORN groups became concerned

about the effects of the plant's emissions on their cities. Finally, the ACORN board, composed of one representative from each affiliate, voted to intervene formally in proceedings against AP&L before the Public Service Commission. Using a 1973 study by Governor Bumpers' Energy Forum and other resources, ACORN formulated 107 questions concerning the need for more energy and the environmental and economic impact of the White Bluffs plant. These questions as well as briefs from state agencies and ecology groups helped the Public Service Commission decide that AP&L's environmental impact statement failed to provide satisfactory evidence on the plant's long-term effects.

Meanwhile, the farmers directly confronted the utility with some imaginative tactics of their own. A request delivered by a delegation of ACORN members and signed by over one thousand area residents asked the company for a utility deposit in reverse. The deposit would serve as a guarantee against any damages suffered by the farmers from the plant's operations. AP&L wanted neither controls nor responsibility.

Had these area organizations stood alone, the protest might have ended there. But as people around the state were becoming aware of Redfield, ACORN was discovering who pulled the strings at Arkansas Power and Light. The parent company, Middle South Utilities, had its headquarters in New York City. And to the surprise of many, ACORN learned that the company's largest stockholder was Harvard University.

Going to Harvard

ACORN's farmers took their case to Harvard with two requests: (1) that an "independent" economic and environmental study be made of the plant's impact on Arkansas; and (2) that Harvard use its position on Middle South's board of directors to pressure the corporation on the question of sulfur controls. At Harvard, students learned of Harvard's "Arkansas connection," and articles and letters began regularly appearing on the subject in the **Harvard Crimson**. When Arkansas governor Dale Bumpers, the standard bearer of the "New South," spoke at Harvard, he encountered unexpected, stiff questioning about politics back home. He responded by calling for responsible measures by AP&L to protect Arkansas from pollution by the White Bluffs plant. The Arkansas press, aided by ACORN, picked up this news item and carried it across the state. The Governor eventually also supported ACORN's demand that Harvard undertake a systematic

study of the plant.

The university's Advisory Committee for Shareholder Responsibility (created in response to protest over their holdings in Gulf Oil) publicly released a letter to Middle South urging the installation of sulfur controls at the Arkansas plant. As an institution, however, Harvard refused to conduct a study and make recommendations, but observed that individuals associated with the university were free to do so. ACORN then expanded the tactic by successfully soliciting strong statements of opposition to AP&L's policies from thirteen other university stockholders. Southern colleges—Vanderbilt, Tulane, Emory, the University of North Carolina and the University of Virginia—offered the least response to the concerns of what had become a rapidly growing number of Arkansans.

On June 17, 1974, the forces of AP&L will meet the Redfield farmers at a formal Public Service Commission hearing. In response to PSC's objections raised in the previous round of informal questioning, AP&L has hired a number of outside experts and prepared a massive 700-page environmental impact statement. Other intervenors, including the state attorney general and a statewide ecology group, will be on hand at the proceedings. At that time, the PSC will determine whether AP&L should start construction based on two factors: the Commission's acceptance of AP&L's environmental impact statement, and the evidence the company produces to show a need for more energy.

Win or lose, ACORN has upped the price of profit in Arkansas—and perhaps other corporations will think twice before trying to save money by increasing the environmental costs to the citizens of the state. In mobilizing people around the state to come to the aid of the Redfield area residents, ACORN has followed its organizational pattern. But in taking the fight outside Arkansas, it has stretched its own model and opened it both to chance and change. Both the Non-Partisan League of North Dakota and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union weakened their impact after overextending themselves into new states and issues. Changes in ACORN have thus far not involved such radical expansion of its base or constituency. ACORN has kept the fight within Arkansas by focusing on the farmers of Redfield, the Public Service Commission hearings, and the statewide capacities of the ACORN structure. However, for the first time, the source of local discontent has been explored to its corporate roots. Whatever happens in the PSC hearings will involve this transition in people's consciousness from the farms of Redfield to the investment power of Harvard University.



photo by Raiford Ragsdale/Nexus

THE ACID IN THE CITRUS KEEPING THEM HUNGRY IN FLORIDA

by D. Marshall Barry and Sr. Ann Julia Kinnirey

As each citrus season opens, Florida growers and politicians worry that they won't get enough labor to pick the fruit. The president of the Citrus Industrial Council, looking enviously at the sugar interests who somehow bring in Jamaican cane cutters for each harvest, says that "without silly federal interference" the ranks of pickers could be swelled from across the border since the Department of Labor usually makes only pro forma certification of the need for foreign workers when agribusiness wants them. Conditions have not changed much for farmworkers since the 1930's. As Pa said in *Grapes of Wrath*: "The more fellas he can get, an' the hungrier, less he's gonna pay.

And he'll get a fella with kids if he can. . . ."

The agribusiness-government conspiracy to perpetuate hunger among Florida's farmworkers surfaced once again during the 1973-74 season. Following in the footsteps of his acknowledged mentor and predecessor, Spessard Holland, United States Senator Lawton Chiles responded on cue to the agribusiness pressure for willing, that is hungry, workers. Casting aside the populist image of his campaign in which he walked around the state talking to the common man, "Walkin' Lawton" crusaded on the floor of the Senate and in meetings around Florida against "the fraud and abuse" in the food stamp program. "The problem,"

he stated last year, "is that we are opening the program up so fast that [the Department of Agriculture] cannot keep up with it and get the regulations set. . . . In my state right now we cannot get the fruit crop picked. It is as simple as that. We are going to leave twenty percent of the crop in the groves. . . . The ability is there to work seven days a week, but as long as they [the farmworkers] can draw food stamps, they do not want to work."

There are only three errors in the Senator's argument. First, according to Eugene Sanchez, director of food programs for Florida, only 51% of those eligible in the state for food stamps currently receive them. Perhaps the Senator should ask the 152,000 hungry, eligible families who don't get food stamps whether the program has expanded *too fast*? After all, it was in 1939 when the Secretary of Agriculture, Henry Wallace, began the commodity distribution program that he pledged: "The day is not far distant when all the people in the United States will be adequately nourished." However, the 1973 report by the Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Public Needs, entitled "Hunger—1973," lists 45 counties out of the 64 studied in Florida as areas of especial concern. While 52% of the poor throughout the U.S. in 1970 received food assistance, 50 out of 64 counties studied in the "Sunshine State" fell below even this average.

Secondly, Senator Chiles was wrong about the twenty percent loss in the citrus crop due to a shortage of workers. After a record harvest the Florida Cannery Association announced on December 8, 1973, that the quantity of orange juice concentrate in storage at that time was 71% greater than a year earlier in spite of an increase in retail sales of 11%. Sufficient labor was available to harvest a record crop including an additional 4.7 million boxes of citrus in Polk County (a 10% increase) and an additional 3.4 million boxes in Lake County (an 11% increase) over the preceding season's crop totals. In the Senate report, "Hunger—1973," Polk and Lake Counties are singled out as "Failure-to-Fed" counties, with only 28% and 23% of their poverty populations, respectively, receiving federal food assistance. Since Senator Chiles was born in Polk County and represented this area in both houses of the state government, he should be aware of these extreme hunger problems so well documented.

Third, Senator Chiles speaks of "fraud and abuse" of the food stamp program in Florida. Whose facts is he using? Assistant Secretary of Agriculture Yeutter, testifying before the same Senate Select Committee (June, 1973) stated: "Each time a violation is prosecuted it makes big

headlines. Many people assume that that means that everyone in food stamps is cheating and there is massive fraud and massive violative intent. That simply is not the case. In fact I am personally surprised to find the rate of violation to be so low. It think that it is encouraging that we have a situation where really most people are still basically honest."

In support of his testimony Mr. Yeutter filed a document prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture which says in part: "The percentage of bonus coupons issued through fraudulent activity in relation to total bonus coupons issued during the first three quarters of fiscal year 1973 is eleven hundredths of one percent. . . . [and] the percentage of fraudulently participating households, as related to the total participating households, equalled 21 thousandths of one percent." (For the purpose of comparison, the Internal Revenue Service estimates that ten percent of Americans cheat on their income tax returns.)

When asked by the authors at the "Food Stamp Abuse" rally at Tavares on December 10 whether he was assuming that Floridians were less honest than the averages presented above, Senator Chiles naturally denied any such intent. However, given the extreme assumptions that the incidence of food stamp abuse among farmworker households in Florida is five times the national average (or *one tenth of one percent*) and that *all citrus workers* are on food stamps, Senator Chiles would be out to catch *fewer than ten possible* farmworker households among Florida's estimated 40,000 citrus harvesters. Of course the problem of the *unfed, 152,000* families in Florida is still to be tackled. That many of these families will be found in the farmworker population is suggested by an April 1971 report by the Manpower Evaluation and Development Institute. Based on data from interviews with 4,000 migrant families, the institute reported that only nine percent had applied for any public assistance, including food stamps.

Undeterred by such reassurances, Senator Chiles continues to hold meetings with local businessmen, agricultural interests, and government officials to discuss "the progress of his anti-food stamp abuse program." Flanked by

Dr. Marshall Barry, an assistant professor of economics at Florida's New College, is a board member of the National Sharecroppers's Fund and the Florida Migrant Ministry and a member of the State Manpower Planning Council. Sister Ann Julia Kinnirey is a Sister of Notre Dame de Namur and a professor of philosophy at Trinity College in Washington, D.C.

officers of the Citrus Industrial Council and officials of Florida's food stamp program, Senator Chiles met with 300 growers in Sebring in November and another 400 in Tavares on December 10. In the Tavares meeting, Senator Chiles sluffed aside the direct question of what he was planning to do to assist the unfed 152,000 households in Florida. When pressed on the extent of food stamp abuse, a state official admitted that only 71 violators out of 156,000 households certified for stamps had been prosecuted. This 0.045% violation rate for all users including non-farmworkers and retail food stores prompted the subdued admission that "the percent of fraud is very low in Florida." However, the only firm policy change promised by Senator Chiles at this meeting was a federal appropriation to enable the state to establish a computer-programmed cross-check on food stamp recipients to catch abusers of this program. No funds were promised to help expand the program to the hungry in his state.

In order to grasp the extent of Chiles' conspiracy against Florida's farmworkers, an historical perspective is necessary. Seventeen counties in Florida refused free food programs in 1969 and, eventually, direct programs had to be instituted by the federal government in six counties. It is interesting to note that these programs, which were free from state and local control, were the only ones in Florida in which the supplemental feeding program for pregnant women and young children was in effect. The State of Florida steadfastly refused this program which provided extra nutrition during critical developmental periods just as it refused a \$2 million gift from the United States Department of Agriculture to expand usage of the food programs into rural areas. When the federally administered programs were replaced by state-controlled food programs, the supplemental feeding program was discontinued in every case.

While Florida has traditionally been the stage for hunger exposés, some crises have gone unnoticed by the press. For example, in the summer of 1971 in rural Hardee County, the chairman of the county commission terminated the federal food program when he failed to find sufficient workers to move irrigation pipes in his citrus groves on one day. The result: approximately 2,000 recipients went without food for over six weeks. Since this period of cancellation occurred during the off-season in agricultural employment, suffering among farmworkers was extreme. To fully understand the discrimination against the farmworker community, it must be pointed out that the supervisor of the food program in Hardee County admitted, when interviewed,



photo by Marshall Barry



photo by Phil Vaile



photo by Phil Vaile

that they continued to dispense food to the "truly needy and deserving poor" who were full-time residents of the county.

The second example (which is no more shocking, but which has affected the welfare of a larger number of farmworkers) was that of the Agricultural Advisory Committee. This institution was staffed by the largest growers, cattlemen, and the county agricultural agent for the area covered. Its function was to ensure that farmworkers did not take advantage of the food program and stop working for the area's farmers. There was no participation by farmworkers in the deliberations of this powerful body which so seriously affected their well being. In fact, at the Agricultural Advisory Committee meeting in Hendry County on April 17, 1970, an investigator for the Florida Rural Legal Services, an Office of Economic Opportunity funded organization, was excluded because he had not been invited to attend.

The power of this body was unlimited in the area of food distribution requirements for farmworkers. Quite simply, it met prior to the agricultural season to determine the exact amount of work which would be available during the planting and harvesting period. It determined, without checking with farmworkers, what the rate of pay would be in each crop in each month. The result was a schedule of future incomes per month for farmworkers in the area covered by the program which effectively excluded farmworkers from eligibility for food assistance.

Two agricultural disasters in South Florida proved the efficacy of this grower-controlled mechanism to ensure a supply of hungry workers. In 1970 torrential rains and floods severely damaged crops in Collier, Hendry, Lee and Palm Beach counties. In response, the federal government declared the area a disaster and provided emergency funds for farmers and wildlife in order to compensate and protect them. While the flood control district and the Fresh Water Fish Commission were given \$20,000 to build feeding islands for deer during the floods, and while farmers were given millions of dollars in low-interest loans and other assistance, the plight of the farmworker was ignored. If crops are ruined by floods, there are few employment opportunities for farmworkers, but the government failed to see this causal relationship. Farmworkers were denied food assistance because the Agricultural Advisory Committee refused to revise its income estimates for farmworkers in light of the disaster. While the growers received their welfare, they effectively denied food to hungry farmworkers even though the agribusinesses knew that there were no opportunities for farm employment.

The following season brought another disaster for the farmworkers of this area and another clash with the Agricultural Advisory Committee over its income projections. This time the crisis was caused by a severe drought which, coupled with freezes in certain areas, greatly reduced the harvestable crops. Again the government responded with disaster relief funds for the farmers to drill wells for irrigation. Again there were no programs for the unemployed and hungry migrants whose jobs had been destroyed. It was only after a march to, and an all-night vigil at, the Florida residence of the President that any action was taken. At that time, long after the hunger crisis arose, the local officials were authorized to issue free food stamps to farmworkers. As a result, the estimated days of work set by the Agricultural Advisory Committee the previous October were changed to zero for March and April for 1971. The dramatic increase in the number of certifications reflects the unmet food needs. For example in Hendry County, the number of people (not families) being assisted by food stamps was only 1,815. In March, when the power of the Committee was temporarily suspended, the number rose to 3,557 people. When interviewed, the local administrator of the food stamp program in Hendry County stated that he was distressed that the government declared Hendry eligible for Disaster Relief Funds. He stated that he felt the migrants were out to cheat him. As a postscript to this case study, this supervisor revised the April estimate from zero days of projected work ordered by the State to ten days of estimated work. This act removed many farmworkers from the food stamp program which they had "enjoyed" a scant six weeks.

Why, it might still be asked, should agribusiness promote hunger among farmworkers to the extent of pressuring a U.S. Senator to attack such a straw man issue as food stamp abuse? The answer lies in identifying the agricultural interests which are being served. The following companies account for approximately 60% of the citrus products—concentrate, juice, fresh fruit—and an even higher proportion of the farm labor employment in Florida:

Ben Hill Griffin (owned by the citrus baron and finance director for Sen. Chiles' campaign)

Coca-Cola (through its Minute Maid subsidiary)

Lykes Corporation (Lykes Pasco and Youngstown Steel Corporation)

Tropicana

Citrus World (the Donald Duck label)

Adams (owned by Royal Crown Cola)

H.P. Hood (Boston milk and ice cream firm)

Kraft (national food conglomerate)



photo by Reynolds Russell

General Foods (Bird's Eye label)

Libby-McNeill-Libby (owned by Swiss-based Nestle)

Stokely VanCamp (national food conglomerate)

Gulf+Western (conglomerate which includes Paramount Pictures)

DiGiorgia (of California grape boycott fame)
Connecticut General Life Insurance Co.

These are the giant, diversified, and, in many cases, multi-national agribusinesses for which Senator Chiles is speaking. These are the recipients of the "welfare-writ-large" subsidies and price supports calculated by a Brookings Institution report to be equal to the total federal, state, and local cost of *all* public assistance programs for the poor including food stamps. The largest 7.1% of all farming units more than doubled their net income from farming as a result of such welfare, and they received 52.9% of the

price support benefits. They're doing well, yet they employ a U.S. Senator to hunt down the few suspect farmworkers who are alleged to have defrauded the taxpayer of what at most would amount to less than \$0.28 a meal for a family of five.

Even the food stamp program was designed as welfare for the growers since its function was to increase the demand for *surplus* farm products, thereby maintaining higher prices for the crops. This is the rationale for leaving the program under the control of the Department of Agriculture and not the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, with the approximately twenty percent rise in the cost of food last year, agribusiness is now interested in diverting attention from high prices to "abuse" in the food programs. But the welfare continues at a record rate for Florida's citrus industry. In 1971-72, prior to the record citrus crop and surplus production, the

Department of Agriculture purchased no citrus products for "distribution to the needy." Last season, however, more than \$21.6 million of the citrus products produced in Florida by 12 corporations were purchased for the poor of America. Since there were no studies which showed a greater incidence of scurvy among the poor last year than in previous years, it is clear that the government was simply granting welfare to the corporate interests which control the citrus industry in the state. In order not to discriminate, large purchases were also made from agribusinesses in California and Texas. More purchases "for the poor" have been promised again this season since citrus production is expected to be only 4% less than last year's record. For a clearer perspective of the size of this corporate dole, the 1972-73 purchase by the Department of Agriculture is the equivalent of \$1,014 for each of the 21,350 citrus pickers recorded on the peak employment day by the Florida State Employment Service. Under current guidelines, no citrus picker would qualify for \$1,014 in free food stamps during a 12-month period.

And the \$21.6 million purchase is only a small part of the welfare received by the citrus industry in Florida. The University of Florida as a land-grant college operates a citrus research station at Lake Alfred which provides this small rural community with more graduate degree-holding residents per 1,000 population than Washington, D.C. or New York City. The citrus industry in cooperation with other producing areas is also legally permitted to control the supply of citrus products which are shipped to market. The Department of Agriculture routinely grants shipment limitation requests submitted by the grower pro-rate committees. As a result, the citrus growers have an important influence on the prices of their products which would be considered a violation of the anti-trust statutes in another industry.

But yet these corporations are escalating their attack on farmworkers. Its future intensity is seen in a memorandum written by L.E. Esch, Food Stamp Supervisor for the State of Florida in Region 9, to all food stamp certifiers and supervisors under his direction. This memo (dated June 15, 1973) discussed the statewide conference held only one week after Senator Chiles had launched the anti-food stamp abuse initiative on the floor of the Senate. Mr. Esch lists the following points as "...the meat of the conference discussions," and the emphasis shown is in the original memo:

1. Food Stamp Unit supervisors in each county will, in September, obtain their local Farm Bureau's forecast (usually printed) of the

number of days of work projected to be available for each of the approaching months of the farm season (which your local farmers will have already determined in their conferences with your local Farm Bureau). These are to be the *MINIMUM* number of days' work acceptable for certification at the Food Stamp Office! The forecasts generally range from ten to fifteen available days of work monthly.

2. According to Category #3, revised Page #36 in your manual, we are permitted to deny food stamp certification to farm labor calendar recipients who are not working as much as 30 hours weekly, *IF MORE THAN 30 HOURS' WORK A WEEK WERE AVAILABLE*. Pressure from the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association now bearing on us, is to get us to enforce this provision next farm season, in an effort to force the laborer who works only one or two days each week to work more days. All of you, I assume, have at least a nodding acquaintance with the type of client who prefers not to work any more than is absolutely necessary for basic survival.
3. Those who work at farm labor less than 30 hours weekly are to be registered for work.
4. The burden of *proof* of less than acceptable weekly hours worked lies on the shoulders of the *CLIENT*, through doctors' statements, etc. —and you have some discretionary latitude here. If the County Health Clinic in your area (or some physician in private practice) hands out doctor's statements wholesale, to whomsoever requests one, you *may*, if you wish, disregard those statements as invalid. On the other hand, you *may* accept them and place them in the client's file folder if you wish—for the regulations merely require that a doctor's statement *BE* there, not that it be proven to be an actual or acceptable disability.

When you 'clamp down' on the farm laborers who are not claiming minimum acceptable days of work monthly, have no fears. You are following U.S.D.A. and State of Florida regulations as set forth in our manual, and don't let clients or organizations intimidate you! Merely calmly explain that you have no choice in the matter. The standards are nationally set, and your job is to see that they are met and that regulations are followed! Let them 'holler' all they want. You will be backed up by Region Office, State Office and U.S.D.A., if they care to take it that far —*EVEN* if they write their congressmen who then demand an explanation! Just be sure to carefully document in the case record everything you examined or did, and your reasons for any action taken.

In short, apparently oblivious to the hunger which resulted from the Agricultural Advisory Committee in South Florida in 1970 and 1971, the local Farm Bureau sets the number of days of work available *in the future*, and the State of Florida cancels the farmworker's food stamps if he fails to work the projected number of days. If there is an upward pressure on wages, it is a simple matter to increase the projected number of workdays required for farmworkers thereby depressing the wages which must be paid by the Farm Bureau's membership to the farmworkers. When confronted with the Esch memo, the State Food Stamp Director stated that Mr. Esch had "misinterpreted" the substance of the meeting.

In a strident memorandum from the State Welfare Director (dated July 26, 1973) we read: Effective immediately, all able-bodied unemployed agricultural workers 18-65 shall be required to register for employment at the time of application [for food stamps] even though they state they plan to begin work the following day. Under the new rules, the worker *must* accept any job offered and any piece-rate wage which can be expected to yield the minimum wage for agricultural workers of \$1.30 an hour. In the citrus industry, the crew leader system prevails. The crew leader has a contract from the grower, and then proceeds to get the work done at the greatest profit (lowest cost) to himself. In this way they insure that their daily wage will not drop drastically, even though they expend as much effort in picking. According to the Food Stamp administrator for Florida, the farmworker cannot refuse to pick if the piece-rate is too low. He must accept the wage offered by the crew leader or lose his food stamps for the *whole* certification period. So under the guise of finding cheaters, farmworker wages can be depressed and agribusiness' profits rise. If the farmworker exploited by this "welfare" quits, he loses not only his day's wages, but also his food stamp allotment and certification.

The farmworker must reapply for food stamps each month and show that he has worked the number of days projected as available for the preceding month. If he has not met the work quota, he is required to register for work and thereby enters into this forced labor mechanism automatically.

Why do the farmworkers need food stamps? Why should the taxpayers' money through federal food programs and product purchases have to subsidize the corporate giants in the Florida citrus industry? Why can't the industry pay the farm laborers a living wage so they can provide themselves with decent housing and support their families with self-respect? A hiring hall system

which freed the farmworker from exploitation by the crew leader would at least secure for the worker what he is promised. Coca-Cola has a contract with the United Farm Workers (AFL-CIO) and always has a surplus of job applications from farmworkers who seek the protections and benefits of a union contract. For example, in Fort Pierce the United Farm Workers Union hiring hall had more than 300 workers registered for work at the same time that the Fort Pierce Growers' Association received approval to build barracks for use by the Mexican nationals they will import into the area to reduce their labor costs. They claimed that this undermining of the local labor force was necessary because "these people [the American workers] are taught by the federal government that they shouldn't work with their hands," or perform manual labor. Incidentally, the Senate Report "Hunger—1973" identified this locale as a "Hunger County" with 27% of its population receiving food assistance. Wages for farmworkers in Florida are so low that even with the large increase gained by the union in 1972, a large percentage of hourly workers *under union contract* are still eligible for food stamps even though they work a 50 hour week. The food stamp program is clearly a two-fold subsidy for growers: it increases the demand for and the price of agricultural products and it underwrites the continuance of low wage levels in the food industry. Its efficacy in the latter role is being increased by the current initiative.

That wage levels and not a shortage of workers is the issue concerning the agrimonoliths in Florida is best proven by their cavalier treatment of farmworkers. Rather than attempt to generate a close relationship with a "scarce input," last year Tropicana laid off approximately 2,000 workers. Tropicana will now make contracts not with the workers, but only with the labor contractors (crew leaders). Tropicana's image cannot now be smirched by accusations of unfair treatment of workers. It has no farmworkers, so it says, since it pays none of them directly. It deals only with labor contractors and hopes to deny its workers a union by so doing. DiGiorgio, to escape a confrontation with workers who asked for a United Farm Workers Union contract, laid off its workers and leased company equipment to its supervisors, who now have agreements with DiGiorgio as labor contractors. Adams (Royal Crown Cola) hides behind the same fiction: it has no workers who might ask for a union contract and a decent way of life. It decided to deal only with contractors when over 80% of its farmworkers signed United Farm Workers Union authorization cards requesting a union election.

There are other examples from this season which provide ample evidence of the extent of misery which the new food stamp "work registration" will cause for farmworkers in other states this spring and summer. While cannery workers at the General Foods (Bird's Eye) Florence Villa plant were on strike, the income estimates prepared by local agribusiness interests were not altered for the farmworkers who work for this company. In Orange County farmworkers who went to the food stamp offices when the plant closed were placed in a pending file, but not given stamps even when they showed paychecks which proved they met the income requirements of the Food Stamp Act. It turned out that "pending" meant "pending the resolution of the strike" since they went without food stamps all during the strike.

Other crises such as the truckers' strike which all but stopped the harvesting of fresh fruits and vegetables in Florida, the Homestead Crewleader Strike for higher payments for crewleaders which stopped most hiring and transportation to the fields for farmworkers, and the "Citrus Holiday" granted by the U.S.D.A. to stop all shipments of fresh citrus during Christmas in order to up the prices for processors during the season probably resulted in the same hunger crisis for agricultural workers. At least, Mr. Sanchez, the state administrator for food stamps, doesn't know whether or not income constraints were eased to reflect the reality of unemployment for the workers. The authors requested information on his office's reaction to these crises and he replied on February 22, 1974, as follows: "The information requested . . . will have to be gathered on a manual basis. Therefore, it will be forwarded to you at a



much later date." Who knows how many will go hungry by then!

In conclusion, the "abuses" are the failure-to-feed the hungry of our nation and the perversion of the food stamp program into a mechanism to provide agribusinesses with forced labor. The Farm Bureau-State of Florida-Senator Chiles outcry of "farmworker abuse" is merely another agribusiness initiative to depress the wages and working conditions of the agricultural workers while increasing the corporations' profits. The propaganda also supports current attempts to import foreign workers into Florida, to increase the supply of hungry workers even further. Foreign workers have the added advantage, from the grower viewpoint, of easy deportation should they organize to demand better wages and conditions.

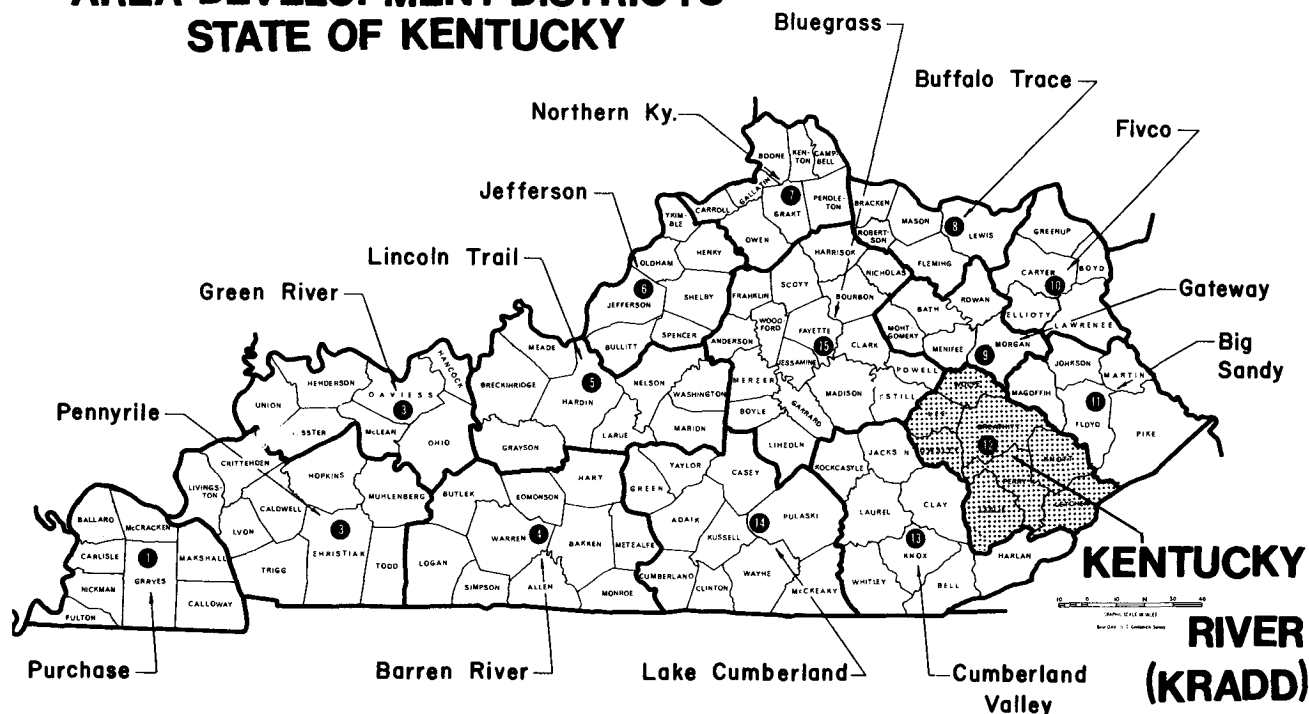
In spite of the facts concerning the absence of abuse, Senator Chiles has decided to maintain his conviction that the food stamp program is a rain of gold that, Circe-like, corrupts man's soul, and renders him unwilling to toil for his living. In a letter to the authors, he concludes:

I can certainly share the thought you expressed [at the Tavares rally] that at the present time there are many needy families in Florida not participating in the food stamp program. I think we do need to reach these families so that they can benefit from the program. However, based on all the information that has come to me since I've been in the Senate, it's clear that there are persons who are seriously abusing the program, and frankly I'm concerned that if the abuses are not eliminated, it may become increasingly difficult to continue or expand benefits for the many families that legitimately deserve them.



photo by Reynolds Russell

AREA DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS STATE OF KENTUCKY



REVOLT!

AGAINST THE PLANNERS IN THE KENTUCKY RIVER AREA DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

by David Whisnant

A man is never nearer heaven than when he dwells in Letcher County.

Charlie Wright, Clerk
Letcher County Court

All of Kentucky is divided into 15 area development districts. All of Appalachia is divided into 62 local development districts. There are plans to divide all of the United States into innumerable development districts. Since the idea of such districts emerged in eastern Kentucky in the early 1960's, it has spread over the entire Appalachian region through the urgings of the Appalachian Regional Commission, which in turn has come to be viewed as a paradigm for development planning strategy and administration for the entire nation. Testifying recently before Senator Joseph Montoya's Subcommittee on Economic Development—which was considering a bill to extend the area development district concept nationwide—

the president of the National Association of Regional Councils called the concept "an evolution of local government and the structure of our federal system." An official of the Kentucky Program Development Office praised it highly (if ungrammatically) as "a linear descendent of the Constitution." ¹

Recent events in eastern Kentucky suggest, however, that such optimism and claims of aboriginal legitimacy may not be justified. In July and August, 1972, hundreds of angry citizens in Letcher County—one of the eight counties of the showcase Kentucky River Area Development District (KRADD)—gathered at a series of heated public meetings to oppose the district's comprehensive plan for the county. When the dust had settled, the county Fiscal Court had abolished both the plan and the KRADD-backed planning commission, the executive director of KRADD had resigned, and the Democratic county judge who

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had originally supported the plan had been defeated in his bid for re-election.

Because Letcher County (and eastern Kentucky) is something of a social, economic, and political microcosm of the Appalachian region, what happens there has considerable predictive value for the region as a whole. It is a relatively small area where most of the region's problems can be seen (like the topography of the county itself) in high relief. Moreover, it is the Appalachian county which more than any other has claimed the attention of the nation during the "Appalachian decade" since the publication of Letcher County native Harry Caudill's *Night Comes to the Cumberlands* in 1963. Media film crews and reporters, Presidential commissions, Congressional committees, and busloads of students bent on seeing poverty and stripmining at first hand—all eventually find their way into the county.

The controversy that arose there during the summer of 1972—in the heart of Appalachia, in the cradle of the area development district concept—raised most of the critical issues involved in planning for Appalachia: the value assumptions and biases of planners, citizen involvement in the planning process, the politics of planning and zoning, the dangers and possibilities of regionalism and "creative federalism," and the actual impact of planning, growth and "development" upon people's lives.

Letcher County: What You Have To Work With

Letcher County was formed in 1842, and since that time we have survived six wars and eleven depressions. . . . Through all those troublesome times, our county system was adequate to meet our needs. . . . Now the planners tell us our county system can no longer meet our needs—that we need plans made by development districts. . . .

Willard Gilliam, Chairman
Committee to Save Letcher County ²

While it may be debatable whether one "is never nearer heaven than when he dwells in Letcher County" in the latter third of the twentieth century, the county must have been beautiful before the convulsive waves of exploitation that have left it torn, tortured and destroyed. By the time it was established and named for the then Governor of Kentucky in 1842, the area of Letcher County—in which a year later vacant land could, by special authorization of the legislature, be bought by mail order for 2½ cents per acre—had already known several decades of settlement and abuse. Following the first permanent settler

around 1795, commercial fur traders moved in about 1804, and when fur-trading ceased to be profitable, entrepreneurs turned to timber cutting in the vast virgin forests of poplars and hardwoods. After the Civil War, large lumber companies began floating their valuable cutting, bought for almost nothing, down the North Fork of the Kentucky River to Frankfort. Two decades later timber was becoming scarce, but the county's enormous coal resources, contained in multiple seams up to seven feet thick lying 50 to 1000 feet above the narrow valley floor, were becoming known to northern corporations. By 1887 Consolidation, Elkhorn, South-East and other companies were buying coal rights, again for a tiny fraction of their value. After the railroad came in in 1911, the coal boom peaked rapidly, with companies throwing up coal camps all over the county, naming them for the coal companies themselves (Seco= South-East Coal Co.) or their executives (Jenkins, Haymond, McRoberts, Fleming). ³ The population of Letcher County jumped from about 10,500 in 1910 to nearly 25,000 a decade later. During the three decades after 1910, it quadrupled before peaking at about 40,500 in 1940. ⁴

The social and political costs of such convulsive changes are nearly incalculable. Besides carting off billions of dollars worth of lumber and coal on which they paid no taxes, corporations changed the basic social structure, gained control of county politics, and in effect turned the whole of Letcher County to their own private uses. When a combination of periodic declines in the coal market and the development of automated mining techniques after World War II reduced the companies' need for human labor (mining employment dropped 31% between 1950 and 1970), dozens of coal camps became ghost towns almost overnight. Seco was a home of sorts to 644 people in 1950; only 88 remained in 1970. Letcher County as a whole lost nearly half its total population. Unemployment currently runs about 10%, ⁵ and heavy outmigration of the work force has left the county with a high percentage of the very young, the very old, and the disabled. When CBS produced its "Christmas in Appalachia" broadcast in 1964, focusing on Letcher and Floyd Counties, tons of food, clothing and toys flooded the distressed area. ⁶ But ten years later, conditions are almost unchanged: per capita income runs

A native of western North Carolina, David Whisnant has written a number of articles on mountain life. As an accomplished musician with a doctorate in English, Mr. Whisnant has a particular interest in Appalachian culture and folklore. This article is a part of his forthcoming book on Appalachian development.



photo by Jim Tramel

about one-half the US average, 16% of the population is on welfare, and only about 50 manufacturing jobs exist in the entire county.⁷ Farming, which once provided a livelihood for many, does so no longer; in 1969, only 83 farms remained of the more than 600 that had existed a decade earlier.

Mining once provided employment for most of the county's work force, but it does so no longer. As slow, expensive deep mining has given way increasingly to fast, cheap (if social costs are discounted) stripmining, people are not needed for a large labor force, and thus have become obsolete. A man working in an underground mine can produce about 2,000 tons of coal in a year; on a strip-auger operation, he can produce about 5,000 tons. Stripmining equipment and methods are relatively cheap and simple, and labor costs are low. Thus stripmining output in the county rose from 62,000 tons in 1950 to more than 3,000,000 tons in 1970. More than 8,000 acres of land have been stripped, and estimates are that by 1990 that figure will increase to 60,000—almost one-third of the total land area.⁸

At present rates of use, the county's coal reserves (6,500 million tons) will last another 300 to 600 years. Production of both coal and oil will undoubtedly continue to increase dramatically—especially if the Kentucky General Assembly approves a pending bill to extend the benefits of the broad-form deed to oil operations.⁹

Thus one could hardly expect to find a county

in which present conditions, the effects of past abuse and irrationality, and the probability of even greater exploitation in the future would make rational, humane planning seem more essential. Mountainsides, roads, streams, and farms have been destroyed by stripmining; good-paying jobs are in short supply; health care and educational facilities are poor; the tax structure is strongly regressive; and young people are leaving the county in droves.

Yet if one walks the streets of the county seat (Whitesburg) and eavesdrops on conversations these days, one is struck by a powerful paradox. Being in Letcher County today is for a fortunate few somewhat like being in California in 1849: there is money to be made—a lot of money, quickly and easily. Secrecy, cunning, and connivance hang heavily in the air. The reason is simple: coal and (increasingly) oil. Oil production in the county doubled in three years (to 226,000 barrels between 1968 and 1971) as major oil companies (frequently through their coal company subsidiaries) moved in.¹⁰ Letcher County's rich seams, with dramatic names like "Hazard" and "Fire Clay" and "Upper Elkhorn," have never been so valuable. Coal that sold for \$3-4 a ton in 1970 and \$8 in 1973 was selling for \$28-32 a year later, and demand was so great that long abandoned slag heaps were leaving the county as "coal." Stories of operators making ten to twenty thousand dollars a day were common.¹¹

In some respects Letcher County has for a

decade or more been in the forefront of planning in eastern Kentucky. Tom Gish, editor of the *Whitesburg Mountain Eagle* and chairman of the town's planning commission, described as early as 1964 how his town had benefitted from planning and participating in federal aid programs which brought a new courthouse, a sewer system, residential zoning and development, a county library, a shopping center, and other intangible benefits. Asked to explain how such dramatic events occurred, Gish said, "Several tools have been utilized. The most effective has been the Whitesburg Planning and Zoning Commission."¹²

How did it happen then, in view of the apparently urgent need for planned improvement and the county's background of experience and commitment, that the Comprehensive Plan threw the entire county into tumult? Why was there such bitter invective, with each side calling the other "Communists" and the resigned KRADD director calling the leader of the opposition "a nut, and a tool," his followers "stupid, selfish, uninformed, and some of them deliberate damned liars," and editor Gish "a damned agitator"?¹³ The full answer to these questions is complicated, but a first approximation may be gained from an analysis of the Comprehensive Plan itself, without reference to the social and political turmoil it produced.

The Comprehensive Plan and the Planning Process

The Comprehensive Plan was written by William Kingsbury, a planner for R.W. Booker and Associates, of Lexington, under a planning grant from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, administered by the Kentucky Program Development Office (KPDO) through KRADD.¹⁴ Work began on the plan in mid-1971, and was completed about one year later, proceeding administratively through the Letcher County Planning Commission, with advisory technical assistance by KRADD and KPDO. The document itself—160 pages of statistics, maps, planning objectives and programs—followed closely recommendations already adopted in 1971 by the Letcher County Planning Commission. Those recommendations dealt with the county's most obvious problems: providing suitable employment through industrial diversification, public facilities and services (water, sewer, education, health care), transportation, and efficient land use through zoning. The Comprehensive Plan went beyond the Commission's recommendations only in its so-called "initial housing element," based on a "windshield survey" of housing in the county.¹⁵

At one level, then, the Comprehensive Plan

seems a more or less "standard" document whose major effect might merely have been, as was claimed by those who backed it, that the county would become eligible for much-needed federal funds for water, sewer, and other facilities and services.

Looked at more closely, however, the plan contains substantive defects which are not only serious in themselves, but were magnified by a failure to involve the county's people in the planning process.

"The dominant position of the coal industry in Letcher County has existed since the 1920's," the plan said, "and it appears that the industry will continue to hold this position in the future." No premise could be more fundamental. Taken as the starting point for planning in the county, which it was in the Comprehensive Plan, it means that coal rules and that people will have to get along as best they can, usually by the simple expedient of staying out of the way. Stripmining is mentioned, but in a way apparently calculated not to offend mining interests (e.g., "Stripmining can . . . make land unsuitable for future utilization." [p. 19]). Social costs are acknowledged only very gingerly. Some language seems to have been made intentionally ambiguous.

The statement that residential areas "should be free from the influence and possible encroachment of incompatible land uses" (p. 61) seems innocent enough at one level, but it could also be taken to mean that people will be permitted to live only where there isn't any coal. In fairness it should be pointed out that the plan also says that "Mining should take place only where it will not have a detrimental effect on other land uses" (p. 62). Between the two statements lies considerable discretionary latitude. But in Letcher County, as people have learned from bitter experience, those in position to make discretionary judgments are usually those in positions of power (i.e., in the coal business). Evidence elsewhere indicates that the conclusion that coal takes precedence over houses is not at all far-fetched. The plan repeatedly either says or implies that it will be necessary to move people's homes,¹⁶ but when it points out rather gingerly that "it would appear highly desirable to relocate the [coal] tippie in Mayking," it adds that such an eventuality "appears unlikely" (p. 90).

"If stripmining is to continue," the plan concludes, "the miner, government, and developer will have to work together to make this . . . land use plan a reality" (p. 75). The problem in eastern Kentucky is that the government tends to work more cooperatively with mining operators than with private citizens.¹⁷

The plan's treatment of coal is perhaps its most fundamental strategic defect, but class and

value-biased planning assumptions approach it in importance. "As in most rural areas," it says, "people believe that they should be allowed to use their land as they see fit" (p. 47). The statement calls up a host of urban/rural prejudices, but does not raise the question of whether such attitudes are in fact more characteristic of rural people than of those in the city, or of poor than rich. Similarly, the plan argues that land-use planning is "conducive to . . . the efficiency of private enterprise," despite the fact that that efficiency is debatable at best. In Letcher County, the most visible example of unfettered private enterprise (strip and auger mining) is grossly inefficient even by the narrowest of definitions. 18

Thus the Comprehensive Plan turns out to be conventional, derivative, uninspired, and laced with uncritical assumptions. The entire body of alternative literature produced during the past fifteen years on housing, land use, advocacy planning, urban design, energy use, and related subjects is absent from its conceptual base. The design parameters of the plan are therefore limited by a reductionist, technocratic rationality in which *laissez faire* economic arrangements, conventional bureaucratic structures, and middle-class "facilities and services" are assumed to be the *sine qua non* of any civilized social order. Its recommendations amount to a simple extrapolation of growth-center logic and the urban-industrial model. Possible alternative development strategies receive no consideration; tax reform, a ban on strip-mining, alternative housing, and community design are not considered even as theoretical possibilities. 19

The probability of controversy over the plan's content was heightened by the fact that it was not developed in consultation with the community. Whether the citizens of Letcher County had an opportunity to participate in formulating the plan is a matter of dispute; that there was no citizen participation is a point of fact. Indeed, so bureaucratized has planning become that what one would assume is the necessary first step—broad, representative, in-depth consultation with the people about their wishes and needs—never occurred at any point in the planning process. Apparently, the planner never came closer to the county's people than scrutinizing the condition of their houses through an automobile windshield, and even that inspection was carried out by hired assistants. 20

Thus, the stage was set for controversy when on July 18, 1972, the Letcher County Planning Commission approved the Comprehensive Plan and transmitted it to the Fiscal Court for adoption. In the ensuing weeks, the reaction to the plan fanned into flame most of the latent fears, grievances, resentments, and factionalisms that were

smoldering in Letcher County.

The Committee to Save Letcher County

The people of Appalachia are no more and no less stupid, no more and no less intelligent, than people anywhere else. They can and will spot a phony, be it a phony individual or a phony program. . . . Once the facts are laid before a mountain man, once he understands a program or an issue, he almost invariably makes a proper decision.

Thomas Gish, Editor
Mountain Eagle

Gilliam shines on one side. Gilliam's like the moon, you know. As he revolves he is dark on one side, and that way you can't figure Gilliam out.

Joe Begley
Blackey, Kentucky
March, 1974 21

The Comprehensive Plan was formally introduced to the people of the county at the required public hearing on July 18, 1972, and opposition formed immediately. Questions put to planner William Kingsbury were pointed: Why were copies of the plan not available for public inspection? Who benefits if local people have their land condemned for federal tourist complexes? Is there any use to plan since the county is being destroyed by stripmining? Kingsbury's suggestion that people "sit down with the coal operators and say we have to live together" apparently allayed no fears. Noting Kingsbury's estimate that 60,000 acres of the county would be stripped by 1990, Columbus Sexton of Sandlick said that "we'll be lucky to have 60,000 acres left by the time the strippers are done." 22

As details of the plan began to leak out, opposition grew rapidly. On July 22, 200 people gathered at the Mayking school for what became a heated meeting. Spokesman Willard Gilliam declared that "This [plan] could be the first step in enslaving you"; Fred Back of Mayking said, "I built my home and use my land to suit me, and that's the way it's going to stay." Residents of Eolia—on the far side of Pine Mountain where the plan suggested the creation of a major tourist area—were strongly opposed. County judge Robert Collins tried to get permission for KRADD director Holliday to explain the plan, but was voted down, and was challenged to explain his own recent purchase of land in the Eolia area. The following night a protesting group of 300 people overflowed into the halls from a meeting in the circuit courtroom in Whitesburg, and tempers were even

hotter. Voicing a theme that was to become increasingly important, William Ison of Eolia said, "I can't see anything in this plan... except communism, one hundred percent." Phil Bentley of Mayking urged the crowd to take control over their own lives, and plans were made for citizens to attend the next meeting of the Fiscal Court en masse, wearing black armbands and patches signifying "doom for Letcher County" and suicide for any public official who approved of the plan.

Two days later, 500 people descended upon the meeting of the Fiscal Court, and presented 1300 signatures on a petition demanding rejection of the plan. Faced with such opposition, and forced to admit that few people (including the county commissioners) had detailed knowledge of the plan, Letcher County Planning Commission chairman Alvin Webb withdrew it. At the Court's next meeting, Webb formally submitted the plan, but recommended that it be rejected. The Court did so, and then for good measure abolished the Commission itself. The meeting had not been announced, so the crowd was smaller than it might have been, but those who attended made sure their sentiments were clearly understood. Willie Lamb of the McRoberts community drew cheers with his

statement that "When we first went... to the cities, they called us hillbillies. Now they want to move us off the hills. If we're satisfied being hillbillies, why don't they leave us alone?" The meeting ended with the singing of "Cabin on the Hill":

*Oh, I'd like to wander back
To the cabin on the hill
Beneath the shadow of the trees
I'd like to linger still.*

To an outsider, such behavior might tend to confirm prevalent notions that mountaineers are benighted hillbillies who prefer tumbledown shacks and welfare payments to "progress." If one notes their history and their present situation, however, their behavior appears more reasonable. Exploited again and again by lumbermen and coal operators, shorn of jobs and benefits when the mines closed, bereft of children who were forced into distant cities to find jobs, bitterly disappointed and abused by social programs that proved worthless or even harmful, all most of the people have left is their house and perhaps a small plot of land. To take that, or to encroach upon its free use, is to strike at their final shred of independence, dignity and security. "They've welfared us and



photo by Jim Tramel

studied us and stripped us," said a man at one of the opposition meetings. "Now they want to move us." 23

Opposition did not cease when the plan was voted down. By the time of the decisive Fiscal Court meeting, Willard Gilliam had formed the Committee to Save Letcher County, providing an organizational basis for continued opposition. Meetings were being held in a number of communities, and there was talk of moving into the District's seven other counties. Within a few days, the basis of opposition—which had been rather diffuse at first (housing, zoning, stripmining, tourism and other issues were mentioned)—focused on the broad issue of planning itself, and on several narrower (though no less important) concerns typified by an excerpt from the plan published on the front page of the *Mountain Eagle*:

The limited land available for development in Letcher County requires [that] space needed for various land uses be carefully calculated. In addition, there is a need for the rearrangement of space within the county. *For example, many houses should be moved off a hillside or out of the hollow into an area where urban services can be provided.*²⁴ (Italics added)

The *Eagle* dubbed the Letcher plan the "land-use move-'em-out plan," and Gilliam chose the term "rusticide" ("the killing of rural areas") to denote the "gradual, systematic, relentless destruction of our customs, traditions, our mode of living, our civil rights, the right to retain and use our land as we see fit, under the law, and the right of local people to rule themselves." KRADD's board chairman, retired Brigadier General Charles Beach, did not help matters by declaring that "After people get out and live in a nice new house they're going to say, 'Thank the Lord I'm out of that hollow.'"

Arguments in the *Comprehensive Plan* for relocation were conventional: some land presently use for residential purposes is subject to slides or flooding, some dwellings are too close together, or too sparsely scattered up the hollers to provide "urban services" (i.e., water and sewer lines). From the point of view of the planners, and of most urban dwellers, such arguments might appear both sensible and benign. But to the citizens of Letcher County they rang ominously. One of the earliest reports on the region done during the frenzied Appalachian decade of the sixties noted that there was a "low percentage [of people] in metropolitan areas "compared to the rest of the nation, 25 and the subsequent growth center strategy and highway program of the Appalachian Regional Commission were calculated to help

rectify that imbalance.

Holler dwellers were a fly in the official ointment. In an interview in *U.S. News and World Report* in 1966—only one year after the ARC was established—co-chairman John Sweeney said ARC policy was to "Ignore the pockets of poverty . . . scattered in inaccessible hollows all over the area . . . [and build] roads so that . . . [people] can . . . commute to new jobs in or near the cities," which in turn would "radiate some of their prosperity into the impoverished darker reaches of the region." 26 Harry Caudill relates that in 1968 a co-chairman of the ARC visited him, and in response to a question as to what the Commission's aim was, responded bluntly, "To move people out of the mountains." 27 ARC director Ralph Widner spoke upon the occasion of a "residual maintenance population," 28 and his successor Alvin Arnett speculated about giving over some parts of the region totally to the mining of coal, while "bringing miners in, treating them like a work crew on a train." Why should people "have to live that kind of life," he asked an interviewer, adding that "there are places [in the region] now that I would write off as acceptable places to live." Asked if he envisioned wholesale exporting of people from the region, he said "We're not talking anything like that at this stage." 29

Such remarks give substance to both Harry Caudill's contention that "depopulation is a part of ARC's scheme, not because it will benefit people but because it will clear the land for a new round of exploitation by the absentee companies," 30 and to the fears of people in Letcher County that, regardless of how conventional or benign the *Comprehensive Plan* seemed to others, someone intended to move them forcibly—out of the hollers in any case, and perhaps out of the mountains as well. The *Mountain Eagle*'s Tom Gish put it even more bluntly: "Make no mistake about it," he said. "The ARC is planning genocide in the mountains . . . No mountain residents, no mountaineers, no mountain poverty, no problems." 31

Thus as the opposition to the *Comprehensive Plan* formed, it had some promise not only of providing an effective critique of a badly flawed plan, but also of generating a sustained and creative discussion of the county's problems and alternatives, and perhaps even of forming the nucleus of a populist political organization. In its best moments, the controversy turned people's attention toward profound constitutional questions—the right to self-government, to own and use property, and to be governed by representatives chosen in democratic elections. At a November, 1972, meeting of the Committee to Save Letcher County, 150 people heard Willard Gilliam read

from the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident . . . That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just power from the consent of the governed; that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it." Comparing development district bureaucrats to the agents of King George, Gilliam continued to read the subsequent charges that the King "has erected a multitude of new offices, and has sent hither swarms of officers to harrass our people and to eat out their substance." Constitutional questions continued to be raised by both Gilliam and others. Everett Tharpe of Hazard wrote to the *Mountain Eagle*, "I do not believe the people wish to abolish their government, but would like to abolish efforts of the establishment to . . . renege on their duty to . . . defend the basic principles reserved to the people by our constitution."³²

Nor was the Committee without practical accomplishments. They served notice upon KRADD and public officials who supported the plan that they would not tolerate autocratic planning in Letcher County. To insure that local government would in the future be more accountable, they generated petitions to return to the magisterial system, placed the question on the ballot, and convinced the voters to approve it.³³ And they defeated a plan which—however benign in intent and appearance, and however potentially useful in some respects—had undeniably sinister possibilities. It is pertinent to recall, at least, that most of the patterns of exploitation that have operated in the mountains have appeared initially in benign—indeed even beneficent and philanthropic—forms: the church as social service agency, lumber and coal men as harbingers of "economic development," foundations as catalysts of change, New Deals, poverty programs, regional commissions, and at long last, area development districts. Suspicion and paranoia are less suspect in proportion to the objective evidence of past exploitation.

And yet in the final analysis, the Letcher County uprising proved to be abortive. The arguments of the Committee to Save Letcher County were grounded sufficiently in the objective experience of the county's people to sustain a movement fed by anxiety, suspicion and hostility, but not enough to buoy it over the rocks upon which it ultimately foundered: domination of the county (especially jobs and public opinion) by the coal companies, the internecine rivalries of Letcher county politics, and the heritage of red-baiting in eastern Kentucky.

County Politics and Communist Conspiracies

The conservationists who demand that strip-miners do a better job of [reclaiming] what they tear up are stupid idiots, socialists, and commies who don't know what they are talking about. I think it is our bounden duty to knock them down and subject them to the ridicule they deserve.

James Riley, Vice President
Consolidation Coal Company
September, 1970

We are spending billions of dollars yearly to fight communism overseas. But it looks like we are fighting it in the pasture when really it is right here in the barn.

Relon Hampton
Jeremiah, Kentucky
March, 1973³⁴

On January 4, 1973, Willard Gilliam formally announced his candidacy for the office of county judge, thus bringing to the surface a major—but previously submerged—factor in the planning controversy. "If we can resist the planners for another four-year term," he declared, "it is very probable the Development District idea will . . . be repudiated nationally, "implying that he was entering the race purely in defense of the issue, and in fact saying that he himself had "no political ambitions." Such statements ill-concealed the fact that to a considerable extent the planning controversy was, at least among its leaders, an intra-party power struggle among Letcher County Democrats.

The details of the squabble are too numerous (and in some cases trivial) to recite fully. But several major factors merit attention: The Democratic party in the county is divided in its loyalty. One faction supports Robert Collins, and the other James Caudill, his predecessor in office (1962-69). Shortly before the *Comprehensive Plan* was submitted to the Fiscal Court, the county Democratic convention (controlled by the Collins faction) denied any seats to the Caudill faction in the upcoming state convention.³⁵ The slate chosen, moreover, was heavily weighted with delegates tied directly to either KRADD or the county planning commission.

A critical determiner of the dynamics of the controversy was press coverage in the *Mountain Eagle*. Editor Tom Gish's service on the KRADD

board several years earlier had convinced him that the agency, especially under the leadership of director Malcolm Holliday, was not and probably could not become responsive to the needs and desires of the District's people. Some evidence suggests that when the planning controversy arose, Gish may have decided to use it as an opportunity to help get rid of Holliday and permanently curb KRADD's power. Unfortunately, that aim appears to have affected his judgment in handling the planning controversy itself.

The *Eagle's* treatment of Gilliam, in any event, was more positive than appears warranted in retrospect, however justified it may have seemed at the time. In early September, 1972, for example, Gilliam resigned from his job with the Kentucky Department of Economic Security, charging that he had been harassed because of his opposition to KRADD and the *Comprehensive Plan*. Commenting on the resignation, Gish asked "How much is your freedom worth? Well, it's worth your job, Willard Gilliam learned this week. . . . Gilliam learned that you can't be a state employee . . . and exercise your constitutional right of free speech—not if in so doing you are critical of land use plans and planners . . . [and] the Kentucky River Area Development District," Gish concluded that "the fact that those behind the plan would use such extreme pressure upon Gilliam (and upon the Department of Economic Security [DES] to hush him up) demonstrates that the [plan's] threat to mountain people was every bit as real as Gilliam stated."³⁶

Possibly. There is some evidence that telephone calls were made from both KRADD and Judge Collins' office to Gilliam's superiors in Frankfort, and that DES investigators came to Whitesburg to inquire about his activities. Such events undeniably constituted pressure upon Gilliam, but it does not follow that the pressure developed primarily because he opposed the plan. It could just as plausibly have developed because he opposed Robert Collins, whose political future was threatened by any continuing controversy and who as incumbent judge could (and apparently did) use his political influence both in Frankfort and in Hazard (headquarters of KRADD, on whose board he sat as county judge) to help silence his opponents, regardless of the issue.

Gish was also reluctant to back away from Gilliam once his reactionary sentiments became clear, as they very quickly did. Principled opposition to exploitative plans and planners was very nearly submerged under red-baiting, which has been a consistent feature of eastern Kentucky politics for forty years.³⁷

Repeatedly, Gilliam and other opponents of

the plan waved the Red flag. "In Russia they have their five-year plans," he said. "In this country we have development districts. These are two different roads to the same destination." Later he added that the planners were using "the method used by socialistic and communistic governments." In letter after letter to the *Mountain Eagle*, and in meeting after meeting, people joined Gilliam in castigating the "socialistic" and "communistic" planners and their efforts "to collectivise us."³⁸ Nor was the tactic used solely by one side. Asked to explain Gilliam's possible motives, ex-judge Collins said he was a "damn Communist."

The ultimate beneficiary of these tactics was the Letcher County Republican Party. In the Democratic primary, Collins defeated Caudill (2571 to 2334). Gilliam polled only 784 votes out of nearly 5000 cast, failing to carry a single precinct, including his home precinct of Mayking. Although Letcher County is registered 3:1 Democratic, Collins lost to Estill Blair in November, and the county acquired its first Republican judge in nearly twenty-five years.³⁹

For the people of Letcher County to see the *Comprehensive Plan* as a Communist plot is in one sense simply ludicrous—a product of incomplete analysis, bad leadership, and possibly of cynical manipulation by vested interests. But the response is not completely lacking in legitimacy, for it is historically demonstrable that planning has not infrequently been used as a respectable instrument of colonial domination or fascist repression. One's instincts may be right even if one's analysis is incorrect.

Explicit rhetoric of political repression is relatively rare, of course: normally such values and impulses are only *implicit*. At the literal level, planners and architects deal in matters of "design," "balance," "unity," "efficient land use," economics and—in Letcher County—the provision of "urban services." The political and cultural implications and consequences of their planning and building flow, as Robert Goodman has observed, "from [their] adherence to the conventions of a repressive social structure which is biased against the people [the] plans are supposed to serve." Functionally, planners thus frequently become the "soft cops" who provide "culturally acceptable rationalizations for projects whose form and use have already been determined" by their usefulness to vested interests. This was made abundantly clear in the urban renewal experience of the past decade, whose hallmarks were duplicity, conflicts of interest, class and professional bias, official inaction and intransigence, and autocratic procedures.⁴⁰ It is of course not necessary to argue that architects and planners are in active collusion

with vested interests; it is sufficient to note whose purposes will be in fact served by their efforts.

A major long-term beneficiary of the Letcher County controversy may in fact prove to be the coal industry. Full details of coal company involvement in the Letcher County controversy may never be known, but some concrete evidence indicates that it was not uninvolved either in the controversy itself or in the closely related Democratic party battle.

Mining and Planning: A No-Win Situation

The proposals contained herein . . . are presently subject to changes based on private, rather than public decisions. . . . As matters now stand, . . . decisions regarding the [KRADD] area's economic and social future development rest almost totally with the owners of . . . sub-surface [i.e., coal, oil, gas] rights. This is . . . a policy inherent in the present legal status.⁴¹

Immediately after his resignation from the Department of Economic Security, Willard Gilliam became a salaried "advance man" for Crawford Engineering Company, which serves mining companies.⁴² On the eve of the November, 1972, general election, Gilliam had revealed his sympathy for industry (which in Letcher County is by definition the coal industry) by declaring that "In rural areas industry should be allowed to choose its own location. With all the constraints already on industry we don't want to add another."⁴³ In an interview later, he said he was "not defending stripmining," but went on to do precisely that. He contended that reports of environmental damage are "played up out of proportion," that the broad form deed is perfectly valid, and that reclamation is easier in the mountains than on level land. Speaking with the facility of a man who must have considerable experience cajoling reluctant land-owners, he said, "To me what it amounts to [is that] they've just sort of shifted the mountain over a few feet. . . . You still have the same thing you had before they went in, minus the coal." Asked if coal companies do not in fact control Letcher County, his answer was a flat "no."⁴⁴

When one examines the situation closely, the unmistakable smell of coal dust hangs over the entire planning enterprise in eastern Kentucky, and especially in Letcher County, where stripmining and the consequent control of the county by coal companies is a *fait accompli*. "Kentucky's seventeen-year struggle [against stripping] has

been a failure," Harry Caudill testified before a congressional committee in 1971, "and . . . the ruin of its land continues unabated." Reporter Phil Primack wrote recently that "The few organized . . . groups of opposition are mostly dormant, shell-shocked into silent despair and frustration."⁴⁵

Connections between coal, politics, and planning pile upon one another in wearying profusion. R.W. Booker & Associates seems to have gotten the Letcher County contract partially because Booker vice-president Hubert Hall paid a visit to Robert Collins Hall, who had come to Booker from the L & N Railroad and later went to work for Harry Laviers' South East Coal Company. The chairman of the Letcher County Democratic party, under Collins control during the controversy, is a public relations man for McCulloch Consolidated Coal, the biggest mining company in the county. Collins left office and began to mine his own coal leases. Percy Elkins, a KRADD official who admits having made one of the telephone calls to Frankfort concerning Gilliam, is a protege of Collins and was chosen as a delegate to the state Democratic convention.⁴⁶ And so on.

In the county itself, there are two views about coal and planning. One is that coal companies wanted planning and zoning so portions of the county could be set aside for stripping without the encumbrance of adjacent residential development. Most opponents of the plan seem to have held this view, and indeed it gains plausibility from an analysis of coal and county politics. There is a counter-argument which holds, however, that stripmining could be controlled only through zoning, for which a comprehensive plan was a prerequisite. That argument is corroborated by developments in neighboring Knott County two years previously. After massive citizen protests, the Knott County Fiscal Court passed an ordinance banning stripmining as a public nuisance. It was ruled invalid by the state Attorney General, who said that counties could control land use only through zoning.⁴⁷

The apparent paradox that follows from the plausibility of both arguments (coal companies both support and oppose planning and zoning) is perhaps resolved by suggesting that the companies prefer not to have planning, but that in cases where it is instituted they turn it to their own uses. This is the elemental paradox that will continue to characterize most planning efforts in the Appalachian region. If there is no planning, exploitative interests are free to work their will; if there is, they use their power to take over the planning process. For the people, it is a classic no-win situation, reminiscent of that on the eve of the Civil War, when the state of Kentucky struggled

to remain neutral while being squeezed between secessionists and Unionists. "No matter which party wins," said one observer, "we lose."⁴⁸

The ADD as Model: Building on the Sand

This paradox becomes especially dramatic when one realizes that the planning assumptions and mechanisms which operated in Letcher County during the controversy over the *Comprehensive Plan* are considered by many to be not only valid but exemplary. Less than six months after the Letcher County plan was defeated, KRADD released a similar draft plan for all eight counties in the district. From there the pyramid builds: the Kentucky Program Development Office has long since divided the State into fifteen Area Development Districts; the Appalachian Regional Commission has divided the entire region into multi-county Local Development Districts; and a bill introduced by Senator Montoya in January, 1973 (S. 232) would establish "multi-jurisdictional" commissions for the entire nation.⁴⁹

Montoya's bill clearly assumes these approaches and mechanisms to have been tested and proven in Appalachia. Major witnesses at the hearings were ARC States' Representative John D. Whisman, who established the first ADD's in eastern Kentucky in the early 1960's; Kentucky Governor Edward Breathitt; and former ARC Executive Director Ralph Widner.⁵⁰ The formation of ADD's has been backed strongly by the ARC, which began making grants to John Whisman for his work in eastern Kentucky only a few months after the birth of ARC itself, and which continues to pay up to three-fourths of the administrative expenses of new ADD's. Much social legislation of the past decade—including the Economic Development Act, the Area Redevelopment Act, the Housing and Urban Development acts, and the Economic Opportunity Act—has either encouraged or required the establishment of ADD's.⁵¹

Thus ADD's have gained a sort of hegemony even though many mayors and other local officials told Sen. Montoya's committee that the system is inefficient, ineffective, unrepresentative, and unresponsive to people's needs. Ralph Widner's successor Alvin Arnett recently admitted that he wondered whether ADD's really were "the proper conduit" for federal funds.⁵²

Nevertheless, at one level, arguments for ADD's seem valid: many counties are too small to hire professional planners; problems (e.g., highways) cross county lines; multi-county planning prevents duplication, encourages efficient, economical

coordination of effort, and allows counties to compete more successfully for scarce state and federal funds.⁵³ The history of KRADD bears out few of these arguments, however. On the contrary, it suggests that ADD's may create more problems than they solve. What is at issue, finally, is not circumscribed jurisdictional boundaries and relative bargaining power of small counties, but the fundamental maldistribution of economic (and therefore political) power in the region. Try as it will, the tail cannot avoid being wagged by the dog.

The Kentucky River Area Development District covers more than 2500 square miles (an area half the size of Massachusetts and twice as large as Delaware), and plans for over a hundred thousand people. Its governing board is made up of the eight county judges, mayors of the county-seat towns, and other "citizen members" selected by the judges.⁵⁴ No one is elected to the board itself by the District's voters, and there is no mechanism for insuring that the views of ordinary citizens will be represented.⁵⁵

During the early days of ADD's in eastern Kentucky, there was an organized effort by Community Action agencies and others to gain a proportional voice for the poor on governing boards. It was defeated by the Kentucky Program Development Office (KPDO) and Governor Louie B. Nunn, who insisted that "an adequate voice for the poor is built into the concept of the ADD districts." When Director Frank Groschelle of KPDO interpreted the governor's statement to be satisfied by the appointment of two representatives of the poor (one poor person, one poverty worker) to boards that averaged forty members, an angry, foot-stomping crowd of over a thousand poor people assembled in the auditorium of St. Mary's School in Covington, Kentucky, to protest. But their protest was unavailing.⁵⁶

Until the late 1960's, however, the unrepresentativeness of ADD's was of limited consequences; cities and counties could and did simply bypass them in their dealings with state and federal agencies. But with the passage of major federal social legislation in the mid-1960's (ARA, EDA, OEO, ARC) a move got underway to make the nominal coordinating and control functions of the ADD's become actual.⁵⁷

On September 2, 1966, President Johnson sent a memorandum to federal agencies declaring that "we must coordinate our efforts to prevent conflict and duplication among federally-assisted comprehensive planning efforts," and directing agencies and departments to insure such coordination in their dealings with state and local governments.⁵⁸ His request was implemented by Bureau of the Budget Circular A-80 (issued January 31, 1967)

which set guidelines to insure that geographical boundaries of state and federal "multi-jurisdictional" planning and development districts were identical, and that statistical variables and methods used in planning studies were comparable. Although fairly loose in this initial formulation, the guidelines were extended and tightened by subsequent memoranda pursuant to both Presidential and Congressional directives.⁵⁹ In their present form, articulated in OMB Circular A-95,⁶⁰ they require that all applications for federal funds be reviewed by state and area-wide "Clearinghouses." Although a favorable "A-95 review" (as it has come to be called) is not required for the receipt of federal funds, the "Project Notification and Review System" which the circular established gives clearinghouses something approaching veto power over applications.

In November, 1967, a few months after the initial circular was issued, Kentucky Governor Breathitt established fifteen ADD's in the state, which have since been designated as A-95 clearinghouses. Thus what ADD's and their Area Development Council predecessors did not have by virtue of broad popular understanding and support, they gained through A-95: control over planning and the expenditure of virtually all federal funds within their boundaries.⁶¹ Such control is supposedly exercised only in the pursuit of soundness of planning, lack of overlap and waste, minimal environmental impact, and similar laudable objectives.⁶² But if the clearinghouse is subject to political or similar extraneous pressures, other considerations may enter.

A full analysis of the politics of KRADD policies—especially those of the A-95 reviews—is beyond both the scope and the intent of this article, but it is perhaps useful to note that some of the fears of those who demanded, for example, representatives of the poor on ADD boards, have ample support in the history of KRADD.

As early as 1964, KRADD's predecessor, the Upper Kentucky River Development Council, held some of its meetings in the Kentucky Power Company auditorium in Hazard where, as Tom Gish has reported, "No one ever mentions public power . . . any more—to do so would insult one's host." Gish noted that proposals and suggestions from local citizens—on the rare occasions when they were made—met with embarrassed silence from the board, who seemed to feel more comfortable consulting with each other and local "leaders."⁶³ When representatives of the Appalachian Committee for Full Employment (the "Roving Pickets") attempted to present a proposal

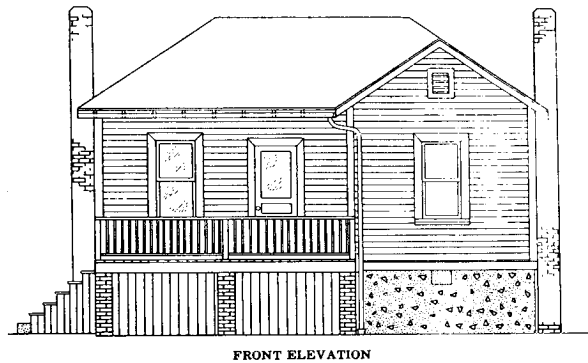
to KRADD's predecessor agency in 1964, they were refused permission, even though they represented hundreds of unemployed miners from the district.⁶⁴

The biased and counter-productive nature of KRADD policies was even more clearly revealed by the handling of the so-called Special Impact Program (SIP) established by the Title I-D amendment to the Economic Opportunity Act. SIP funds were specified to be spent so as to produce a "special impact" in a concentrated area, and to involve local community people in economic development enterprises that they themselves designed and controlled.

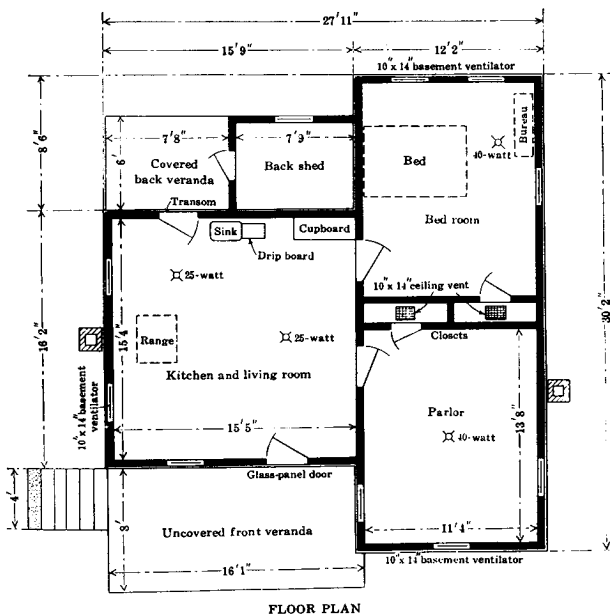
Apparently as a result of a visit by Sen. Robert Kennedy in late 1968, a four-county area in eastern Kentucky was designated to receive \$1.4 million in SIP funds.⁶⁵ The funds ended up under KRADD's control, after passing through an administrative channel which increased the probability that personalities and politics rather than need and potential effectiveness would determine their use.⁶⁶

An early applicant for SIP funds was the Eastern Kentucky Housing Development Corporation (EKHDC), a local non-profit group formed to produce—using local materials and local unskilled labor—homes for low-income residents. The homes—designed in a detailed proposal—were imaginatively designed for maximum economy (using modular, prefabricated construction), suitability for the environment of eastern Kentucky, and adaptability to the customary ways of life of local people. EKHDC's proposal also included broader community development aims, including ownership of the corporation by its own workers after five years. Thus the EKHDC request would appear to have been a natural for SIP funds.

The EKHDC request was denied, however, in favor of a proposal from Tandy Industries, a private profit-making builder of prefabricated houses from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Tandy's "proposal" to KRADD consisted of a hastily edited document originally prepared for a project on an Indian reservation. It had none of the desirable features of the EKHDC proposal (local labor and materials, design adapted to local conditions and needs, community control, worker ownership, broad community development aims, etc.). By any standard, it was a conventional commercial venture. Yet after a long sequence of irregular administrative procedures involving actions and decisions contrary to the letter and intent of the SIP legislation and influenced by personal and political considerations, KRADD approved the Tandy proposal and agreed to "acquire land, develop a site, and construct a building . . . [to be]



FRONT ELEVATION



FLOOR PLAN

PLAN AND ELEVATION OF MINER'S FRAME COTTAGE.

"Plan for miner's frame cottage," from Joseph H. White, *Houses for Mining Towns*, Bureau of Mines Bulletin 87 (1910).

leased . . . by Tandy at . . . a dollar a year."⁶⁷

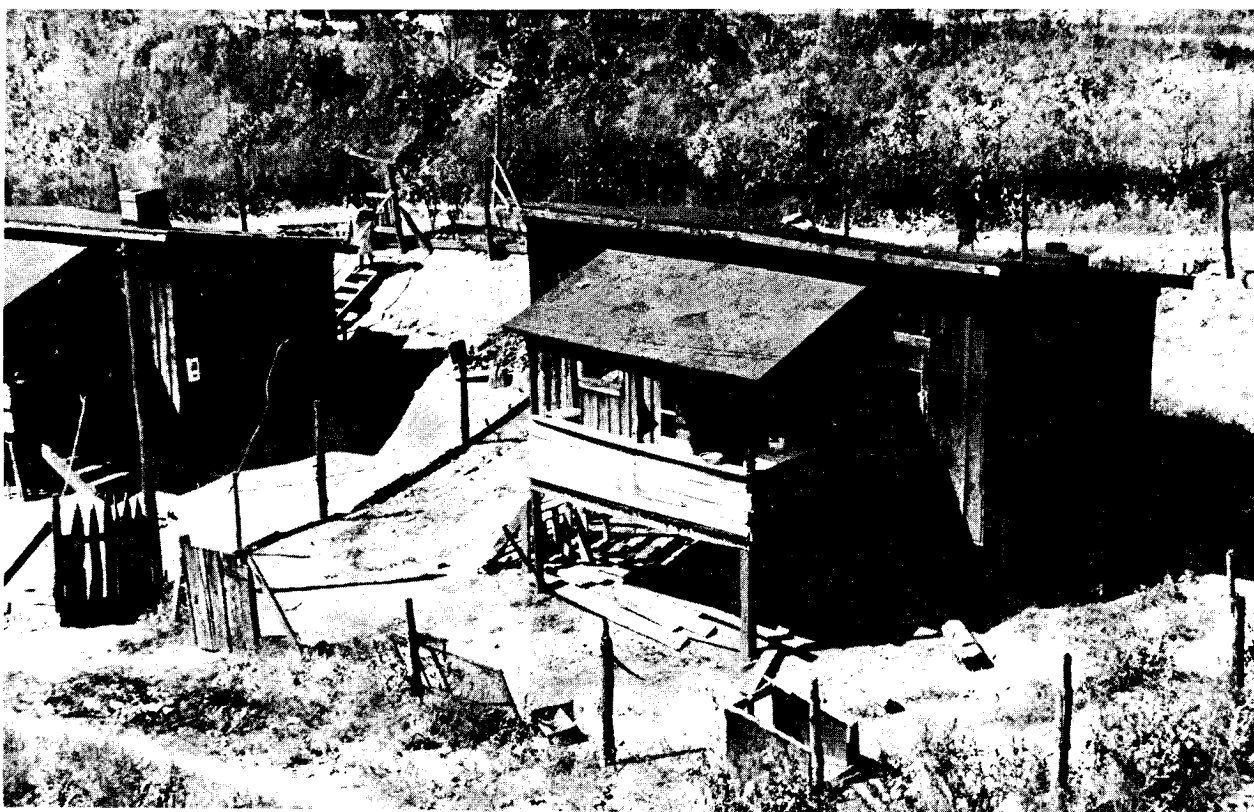
The Westinghouse Learning Corporation study concluded that eastern Kentucky people were not well served by KRADD's handling of the SIP funds,⁶⁸ that personal and political considerations figured prominently in the decision-making process, that KRADD's allocation of SIP money was counter-productive and contrary to the legislative mandate, and that KRADD consistently demonstrated a "lack of faith in the ability of the people of eastern Kentucky to direct and run their own affairs and to successfully launch their own economic enterprises."⁶⁹

Other examples of KRADD's apparent political bias and catering to vested interests are not difficult to find. In 1971, when anti-stripmining activity in the District was at its height, KRADD agreed only very reluctantly and after considerable vacillation to hold a hearing on the issue. The hearing was opposed strongly by board member Charles Beach, who the next year helped get KRADD support for a Corps of Engineers dam at Booneville, which was opposed unanimously by local residents but favored by merchants downstream at Beattyville, who wanted flood protection. Beach is a banker from Beattyville.⁷⁰

The difficulties and hostilities that ensue from such favoritism, political bias, and ineffectiveness are of course compounded by the A-95 procedure, which explicitly depends upon ADD's to exercise good judgement, to increase effectiveness where public funds are expended, and to remain free of the politics implicit in more entrenched structures.

When KRADD by-laws were changed in 1972 to allow "major industries of the area" to place a representative on the board, both the Kentucky Coal Association and the Hazard Coal Operator's Association nominated William B. Sturgill—the wealthiest and possibly the most ruthless stripmine operator in all of eastern Kentucky—for the position. Sturgill was subsequently appointed by KRADD director Malcolm Holliday.⁷¹ Shortly thereafter KRADD gave an unfavorable A-95 review to a proposal to OEO from the Appalachian Research and Defense Fund (ARDF) for funds to continue its advocacy legal work on behalf of welfare recipients, anti-stripmining groups and black-lung claimants.⁷² A few months later, KRADD submitted its own request for \$78,000 to the Appalachian Regional Commission to do a complete aerial mapping of the district. KRADD insisted that it was an innocuous general land-use mapping, but some observers feared that it was instigated by coal operators. The truth may never be known, but the specifications called for mapping of all mined areas and sites of mineral deposits (coal, oil, gas, limestone), nevertheless. Despite considerable local opposition, ARC approved KRADD's request.⁷³

Thus the history of KRADD in no way suggests that the decision to channel all federal funds through ADD's was wise. It is in fact ironic to note that when director Malcolm Holliday was forced to resign as a result of the Letcher County controversy, he was replaced by Paul Townes, who had himself previously resigned as city manager of Hazard, Kentucky, after it became known that the city had misused \$60,000 in federal funds.



Mining Shacks, Jenkins, Kentucky, October, 1935.

photo by Ben Shahn/FSA

Beyond ADD Politics: A Final Paradox

To an uninformed observer, the landscape of Letcher County looks like the result of irrational, random, unplanned development. Paradoxically, however, the condition of much of the county is the result of coldly rational planning. Where there was coal, mines were opened; where mines were opened, towns were built. The towns were designed for maximum efficiency and economy in sheltering and controlling large numbers of workers, and in providing every conceivable necessary service—food, clothing, education, medical care, fuel, tools, even funerals. Every aspect of life was made to conform to the plan. In a few instances, the towns were well built and efforts made to provide services on an equitable basis.

The town of Jenkins, in the upper end of Letcher County, was built by Consolidated Coal Company in 1921. The company constructed its own sawmills, planing mills, drying kilns and brick factories on the site. Besides the necessary houses for officials and workers (a total of 1600 dwellings), there was a complete water, sewer, and garbage system; a school which offered both day and night classes; a library; a recreational

lake and park with clubhouse; a department store; a hospital; an electric generating plant; and several churches. An article in the industry publication *Coal Age* for 1923 conveys the pride that Consolidated officials seem to have felt in building such a showcase:

Jenkins . . . is a town of real beauty. . . . The main street . . . is concreted and separated from the sidewalks by plots of grass . . . [which] the people . . . are prohibited from tramping down. . . . The homes of the officials have all modern conveniences, and the miners' dwellings have as many improvements as have been found practicable. Most . . . are plastered . . . [and] fifty per cent . . . are provided with sinks. . . . [The] houses are painted white, [and] the color scheme of the trimmings is varied by interchanging four dark colors. Every four or five years the houses are repainted. . . . Prizes are offered for the best vegetable gardens, the prettiest flower gardens and the most attractive places. . . . The company plows all lots and furnishes manure; it also supplies trees, vines and shrubbery to those who ask for them, at a cost just great enough to check wanton requests for this favor.⁷⁴

After the railroad came into Letcher County in 1911 and the great Hazard field was opened up, many coal towns were built, and the industry seems to have attempted to derive maximum public relations value from some of the best planned of them.⁷⁵ And indeed, some of them did in fact initially offer better houses and more conveniences than could be had otherwise. But the monetary and social cost of obtaining those "advantages" ultimately proved to be very high.

Once they moved into the towns, miners found their lives under the complete control of the company. They lived in company houses, went to company churches and schools, saw the company doctor when they were ill, and were forced to do all their shopping at the company store. Thus whereas before the coming of the coal companies and their towns, people were too scattered and independent for anyone to control them, afterwards they were crowded close together under conditions of almost feudal dependency. Union organizers found company towns almost impossible to crack; miners who joined unions were at the mercy of bosses and company police.⁷⁶ A U.S. Bureau of Mines manual on the building of mining towns offered the following candid observation on the value of providing families with garden plots:

[Gardens] furnish a pleasurable and profitable way of engaging the miner's unoccupied time. . . . Raising a garden means the investment of labor in the premises on the part of the tenant, and in the absence of individual ownership creates an added attachment to the place which tends to offset the temptation of packing up and following vague rumors about steadier work, higher wages, [and] thicker seams.⁷⁷

As the fortunes of the coal industry waned, coal camps fell into disrepair. Many were closed and sold—sometimes to the unemployed miners themselves—when coal seams worked out or the arrival of automated mining equipment made large numbers of workers obsolete. The Jenkins-McRoberts area population dropped from about 9500 in 1940 to about 3600 in 1970.

Thus it is not difficult to see why current inhabitants of Jenkins or other coal towns in Letcher County—whose parents had moved in as a result of one plan, and whose neighbors and children had to move out as a result of another—thought yet another sinister plan was in the works during the summer of 1972. They had seen plans come and go, and change to meet the

changing needs of those for whom they were made in the first place. There was really no reason for them to suppose that the plan put forth by KRADD and the Fleming, Neon, Jenkins and Letcher County Planning Commission would be any different.

Footnotes

Research for this article was supported in part by a grant from the Southern Investigative Research Project of the Southern Regional Council, Inc.

1. *Hearings Before the [Senate] Subcommittee on Economic Development of the Committee on Public Works* (1072).

2. *Mountain Eagle*, November 9, 1972, p. 21.

3. For a more extended account of this process, see Harry Caudill, *Night Comes to the Cumberland*s (New York: Little-Brown, 1963), pp. 97-103.

4. Data on economic conditions taken from *Comprehensive Plan and Initial Housing Element*, Letcher County, Kentucky (Lexington: R.W. Booker and Associates, 1972). Referred to subsequently as *Comprehensive Plan*.

5. Unemployment is a conservative measure of economic distress, since it does not include underemployment or subemployment (those working at less than their skills warrant, working for substandard wages, or less than full-time).

6. Whitesburg (Ky.) *Mountain Eagle*, December 24, 1964, p. 1.

7. When the U.S. Shoe Corporation announced in 1969 that it would locate a plant in the county that would provide 400 jobs, over 5,000 people showed up to apply. Although offered a free site, utilities, and other inducements, the company eventually located elsewhere.

8. Data from *Comprehensive Plan*, pp. 19, 65. See Caudill, *Night Comes to the Cumberland*s, pp. 305 ff., and *My Land Is Dying* (N.Y.: E.P. Dutton, 1971).

9. The broad-form deed, under which much of the strip-mining is done in the county, is in essence a minerals deed (usually executed decades before strip-mining techniques or machines were known) which leaves nominal surface rights in the hands of the original landowner, but allows the coal company to do whatever it deems necessary to recover the coal, without regard to ecological, social, or other considerations.

10. Consolidation Coal Co. is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Continental Oil; Island Creek Coal Co. is owned by Occidental Petroleum. See James Ridgeway, *The Last Play: the Struggle to Monopolize the World's Energy Resources* (N.Y.: E.P. Dutton, 1973), pp. 273 ff.

11. *Mountain Eagle*, February 14, 1974, pp. 1-2.

12. Thomas Gish, "What a Town Can Do—and How," *Mountain Life and Work*, XL (Fall, 1964), 25-31.

13. Quotations from taped interview with former KRADD director Malcolm Holliday, February 4, 1974, in Hazard, Kentucky. Tom Gish bought the *Mountain Eagle* in the mid-1950's and built it into the most influential weekly in the region, primarily as a result of superb—and frequently courageous—reporting and consistent, in-depth analysis of major local and regional issues.

14. HUD project KY P-88. The contract was executed shortly after July 22, 1971. Eight eastern Kentucky counties make up KRADD: Letcher, Knott, Leslie, Perry, Breathitt, Owsley, Lee and Wolfe.

15. Comprehensive Plan, pp. 43-58. The survey found 29% of the houses in the county dilapidated ("not economically feasible to repair") and another 38% deteriorating (i.e., requiring major repair). The housing survey and recommendations became a major point of contention in the ensuing controversy.

16. Cf. pp. 34, 37, 45, 47, 63, 68, 71. See discussion below.

17. This tendency has been documented innumerable times. See for example, T.N. Bethell, *The Hurricane Creek Massacre* (N.Y.: Harper-Row, 1972), and Brit Hume, *Death and the Mines* (N.Y.: Grossman, 1971). One highly visible result of such cooperation has been the unregulated building of treacherous slag dams for the impoundment of mine waste water all over Appalachia, 13 of which are in Letcher County and none of which are mentioned in the Comprehensive Plan. The *Interim Report: Emergency Investigations of Coal-mine Waste Embankments* (Washington: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1972), lists Letcher County site numbers 103, 104, 104A, 107, 107A, 108, 110, 110A, 110B, 120, R-5-A, R-5-C and X-34. Of these, the first five are classified as having "obvious deficiencies." Articles and photographs of some of the sites appeared in the *Mountain Eagle* on March 2, April 27, and June 8, 1972, during R.W. Booker's preparation of the Comprehensive Plan. The bursting of such a dam at Buffalo Creek, W. Va., in 1972 resulted in 124 deaths, left 4,000 homeless and caused the destruction of \$50 million worth of property.

18. Stripmining entails notoriously high social costs: rock and mudslides, damage to timber and vegetative cover, siltation (and flooding from the bursting of dams originally built to control siltation), destruction of roads and bridges, acid drainage, ruining of farmland, permanent aesthetic damage. Auger mining also wastes large amounts of coal exposed to oxidation, and prevents future recovery by deep mining.

19. For a longer and more general statement of this criticism, see David E. Whisnant, "Finding New Models for Appalachian Development," *New South*, XXV (Fall, 1970), pp. 70-77. In stark contrast to these limitations stands the plan of an offshoot of the Eastern Kentucky Housing Development Corporation in 1970 to use local labor and materials to build low-cost prefabricated houses designed especially to be located on hillsides, to accommodate "traditional living patterns," and "to meet the needs of people who need [them] most and can

afford [them] least." See *Mountain Eagle*, June 28, 1970, pp. 6-7.

20. The contract executed between KPDO and R.W. Booker and Associates neither requires nor suggests that there be citizen participation in the planning process. It requires merely that "After the final printed [plan is] available a public meeting will be conducted. . .to stimulate local interest in the [plan] and the planning process. . ." (italics added). A public meeting held on June 1, 1971, to discuss the Commission's goals and objectives was attended by five members and six citizens. The only notice of the meeting was published in the *Community Press*, which is read by very few people, rather than the *Mountain Eagle*, which goes into about 5,000 homes in the county.

21. Gish, "What a Town Can Do—and How," pp. 34 f.; and taped interview, respectively.

22. This paragraph and the following discussion of the controversy over the plan are based on a series of reports, articles, and editorials from the *Mountain Eagle* during the period following July 18, 1972; and upon taped interviews with many of the principal individuals involved. Interviews were conducted in February and March, 1974.

23. *Louisville Courier-Journal*, August 13, 1972, p. E1.

24. Backers of the plan argued that moving people "out of the hollers" was not emphasized in the text. But a close reading does not bear out their contention. See pp. 33, 34, 37, 45, 63 and 68. The plan even went so far as to say that some residential areas "should be cleared and the citizens relocated" (p. 71).

25. *The Appalachian Region* (Annapolis: Maryland Department of Economic Development, 1960), p. 8.

26. *U.S. News and World Report*, LIX (September 27, 1965), pp. 68-70.

27. *West Virginia Hillbilly*, June 22, 1968.

28. See *People's Appalachia*, I (August-September, 1970), p. 19.

29. *Mountain Eagle*, June 29, 1972, p. 1. Italics added.

30. *Mountain Eagle*, August 24, 1972, p. 2.

31. Tom Gish, "The Homogenized, All-American Model American," *Mountain Life and Work*, XLIX (May, 1973), 14. A *Louisville Courier-Journal* reporter compared the "move-em-out" features of the Comprehensive Plan to the "final solution" of the Jewish problem in Nazi Germany (August 13, 1972, p. E1.)

32. *Mountain Eagle*, August 31, 1972, p. 18.

33. Since 1961, county commissioners had been elected at large. Under the new system, the county commission is made up of magistrates elected from and responsible to specific districts of the county. See *Mountain Eagle*, November 9, 1972, p. 1.

34. Quoted from *Mountain Life and Work*, XLVII (July-August, 1971), p. 5, and *Mountain Eagle*, March 15, 1973, p. 2, respectively.

35. Further complicating matters was the fact that Willard Gilliam served as judge pro-tem under Caudill.

36. *Mountain Eagle*, September 7, 1972, p. 2.

37. A major early source was the mine wars in Harlan and Bell Counties in the 1930's, sparked by the organiz-

ing drive of the Communist-backed National Miner's Union. (See Theodore Dreiser, *Harlan Miners Speak* (N.Y.: Harcourt-Brace, 1932). In the mid-1960's, Pike County was the scene of a red-scare which led to the formation of the Kentucky Un-American Activities Committee. In a speech at Jenkins in 1969, a UMWA district president charged that opposition to President Tony Boyle was Communist-inspired. (See *Mountain Eagle*, May 8, 1969, p. 4.) So easily does the charge of Communism spring forth in eastern Kentucky that when Fleming resident Ralph Smith spoke out against stripmining in 1972, he felt it necessary to defend himself in advance. "People of the coal counties," he said, "I am not . . . a communist, but I am a natural-born coal camp boy who is against the destruction of our land because I love it." (*Mountain Eagle*, April 20, 1972, p. 2.)

38. See a letter from a woman on the Cumberland River; *Mountain Eagle*, September 27, 1973, p. 2. Even Gish himself has proved not to be completely immune to making such arguments. Commenting on the Kentucky Infant and Pre-school (KIP) Program in a speech at Highlander Center (which, ironically, once had its charter revoked and property confiscated as a result of charges that it was subversive), Gish said, "It is no secret that the KIP program is patterned after the Russian system of childrearing which was developed to destroy the traditional rugged character of the Russian peasant." See Tom Gish, "The Homogenized All-American," *Mountain Life and Work*, XLIX (May, 1973), p. 14.

39. Blair, who had also announced belatedly that he opposed KRADD and the plan, polled 4,720 votes to Collins' 3,805.

40. Goodman, *After the Planners* (N.Y.: Simon and Schuster, 1971), pp. 12 f., 21, 93.

41. *Land Use Plan for Kentucky River Area Development District* (Hazard, Ky.: Kentucky River Area Development District, 1973), pp. 1-2.

42. His responsibilities apparently include researching mineral deeds and acquiring stripmining agreements from property owners. Gilliam's relationship to the coal industry, if any, before his resignation is unknown.

43. *Mountain Eagle*, November 9, 1972, p. 3.

44. Taped interview, February 4, 1974.

45. *Mountain Eagle*, November 4, 1971, p. 3, and February 7, 1974, respectively. See Harry Caudill, *My Land Is Dying*, esp. pp. 124-27. The militant Citizens League to Protect Surface Rights (1970 ff.) was centered at Blackey, in the southwest section of Letcher County.

46. In fairness to Collins, it should be pointed out that in 1970 he led a courageous if unsuccessful fight to get a comprehensive severance tax enacted which would have been of incalculable benefit to Letcher County. "Here we are," Collins said, "mired down in poverty right in the middle of the greatest concentration of natural wealth in the country." At a time when the gigantic Equitable Gas Company was paying county taxes of \$3.98 per year, oil and gas wells were being brought in which could easily have been taxed at many

thousands of dollars each per year. See *Mountain Eagle*, February 26 and October 15, 1970.

47. The Knott County Fiscal Court on May 2, 1970, declared stripmining to be "a public nuisance and against the public policy" of the county. On May 7, Assistant Attorney General Charles W. Runyan replied that counties had only such power as had been delegated to them by the legislature, and that the anti-stripmining statute (KRS 350(1968)) gave them no authority to enact resolutions dealing with stripmining. See *Opinions of the Attorney General of Kentucky for the Period January 1, 1968-December 31, 1971* (Cleveland: Banks-Baldwin Law Publishing Co., 1972), pp. 679f., 782 f.; *New York Times*, June 8, 1971, p. 21; and *Mountain Eagle*, May 7, June 11 and 18, and August 27, 1970. The minutes of the January 19, 1971, meeting of the Letcher County Planning Commission show that member Harry Caudill reported that "zoning may be a way to indirectly control stripmining." Caudill's failure to attend most Commission meetings may indicate, however, that he lacked confidence in the mechanism.

48. Gary L. Williams, "Lincoln's Neutral Allies: the Case of the Kentucky Unionists," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXXIII (Winter, 1974), 70.

49. First introduced in March, 1971, at S. 3381, the Public Works Development Act of 1972.

50. See *Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Economic Development of the Committee on Public Works* (1972).

51. See Phil Primack, "Hidden Traps of Regionalism," *Nation*, CCXVII (September 24, 1973), 272-76, upon which portions of the ensuing discussion are based.

52. *Mountain Eagle*, April 13, 1973, p. 3. The entire December, 1973, issue of ARC's *Appalachia* public relations magazine is devoted to ADD's in Georgia, which are admitted to be "at a critical juncture."

53. For an elaboration of these arguments, see "The Local Development District: Foundation for Regional Development," *Appalachia*, I (December, 1967), 9-13; and Donald N. Rothblatt, *Regional Planning: the Appalachian Experience* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1971), pp. 151 ff.

54. Counties have the same number of representatives regardless of their size or population. Perry County has seven times the population of Wolfe, and Letcher has about one-third of the District's total. See *Mountain Eagle*, December 4, 1969, p. 2. KRADD was created when KPDO and ARC more or less forcibly combined two four-county districts.

55. The argument of KRADD officials that representativeness is assured by the presence of elected mayors and judges is not persuasive in view of the domination of county politics by coal interests. Frank Groschelle said in 1969 that the state law establishing ADD's required that "all citizen representatives shall be decided by a vote of the people." See *Mountain Life and Work*, XLV (February, 1969), 4-8. Apparently, no such law is currently in effect.

56. See Hollis West, "CAA Directors Dissent,"

Mountain Life and Work, XLV (December, 1969), 8 ff.; and Groschelle's answer in *ibid.*, XLV (February, 1969), 4-8. In later November, 1969, the Kentucky Poor People's Coalition divided itself into 15 districts to coincide with ADD boundaries. The object was to try to force ADD's to give representation to poor people. See *Mountain Life and Work*, XLVI (July-August, 1970), p. 20. See also *Hearings Before the Ad Hoc Task Force on Poverty . . . Part 5—Appendix* (1969), 287 ff.; Rothblatt, *Regional Planning*, p. 156; and *New York Times* reporter Ben Franklin's article in the *Mountain Eagle*, April 9, 1970, p. 3. KRADD was originally refused designation by the EDA as an Economic Development District because of a lack of low-income participation on its board. The EDA relented after one poor person was put on the board. See *Mountain Eagle*, August 20, 1970, p. 1, and June 3, 1971, p. 20.

57. See Tom Gish, "Who Will Cut the Federal Cake?" *Mountain Eagle*, November 11, 1965, p. 1.

58. Memorandum from the President Requesting Coordination at the Federal Level, September 2, 1966.

59. Section 204(b)(1) of the Demonstration Cities and Metropolitan Development Act of 1966 (P.L. 89-754; 80 Stat. 1255), which sets up a mandatory planning review procedure; §§ 401(a) and 403 of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act of 1968; President's Memorandum of November 8, 1968, to the Director of the Bureau of the Budget; Bureau of the Budget Circulars A-82 and A-82 (Rev.) (December 18, 1967 and January 10, 1969); § 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

60. Office of Management and the Budget, "Federal and Federally Assisted Programs and Projects: Evaluation, Review and Coordination" (38 FR 32874).

61. A-95 does not make establishing clearinghouses mandatory; it merely "encourages" it. But if a state or other unit establishes a clearinghouse, the A-95 review procedure must be followed. ARC's John Whisman disingenuously suggested in 1969 that ADD's merely have "approval power" instead of "veto power." See *Mountain Eagle*, February 20, 1969, p. 2.

62. Some localities have used A-95 effectively to force compliance with the Civil Rights Act. See Igor Sikorsky, Jr., "A-95: Deterrent to Discriminatory Zoning," *Civil Rights Digest*, V (August, 1972), 17-19.

63. *Mountain Eagle*, November 26, 1964, p. 2. On public power as an issue in Appalachian development, see David E. Whisnant, "Power to the People: the Congress for Appalachian Development," *People's Appalachia*, III (Spring, 1973), 16-11; and "A Case Study in Appalachian Development," *New South*, XXVIII (Spring, 1973), 34-43.

64. Everett Tharpe, "Appalachian Committee for Full Employment: Background and Purposes," *Appalachian South*, I (Summer, 1965), 45.

65. The so-called LKLP (Letcher, Knott, Leslie and Perry) counties constituted one of the two districts combined by ARC to make KRADD.

66. OEO commissioned the Westinghouse Learning Corporation to study the use of SIP funds in 1969. The

following discussion is based upon Martha Grosse, *Report on the 1968 Kentucky Special Impact Program* (New York: Westinghouse Learning Corp., 1970).

67. Quoted from *ibid.*, p. 22. Exact details of the agreement are not known, since KRADD refused to allow the WLC analyst to examine the contract. For a full discussion of the Tandy decision, see *ibid.*, pp. 21-76.

68. Over \$250,000 was given to a mining supply company to help expand its operations.

69. Grosse, *Report*, p. 73.

70. See *Mountain Eagle*, March 4, 1971, p. 1, and *Louisville Courier-Journal*, July 19, 1972, p. A4, respectively. Beach is currently Chairman of the KRADD board.

71. See *Mountain Eagle*, September 14, 1972, p. 1. There are, by contrast, no representatives for working miners or conservation groups. Before Sturgill's appointment, the coal industry was already represented on the board by Louis Quick, an engineer for Beth-Elkhorn, who had been appointed once to represent "the professions" and once to represent "civic groups."

72. See *Mountain Eagle*, February 1, 1973, pp. 1, 14. The Big Sandy ADD, which adjoins KRADD to the north-east and which includes Floyd County, also gave the ARDF proposal an unfavorable A-95 review. ARDF lawyers had previously been active in Floyd County.

73. *Mountain Eagle*, September 6, 20, and November 29, 1973.

74. Alphonse F. Brosky, "Building a Town for a Mountain Community," *Coal Age*, XXIII (April 5, 1923), 560-63. Photographs published with the article suggest that Brosky's description is probably reliable.

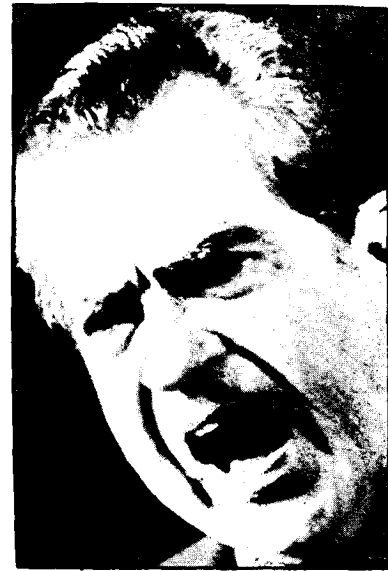
75. Many articles appeared during the three decades 1910-40. See for example Edward W. Parker, "Workmen's Houses in the Anthracite Regions," *National Planning Association Proceedings*, V (1916), 54-66; Thomas F. Downing, "Where to Build Mining Towns and What to Build," *West Virginia Coal Mining Institute Proceedings* (1923), 41-51; H.O. Zimmerman, "Modernization of Living Conditions in a Coal Mining Town," *Kentucky Mining Institute Proceedings*, I (1940), 23-30; and a series of articles in *Coal Age*: III (1911-12), 38-41 and 211-14; V (1914), 936-39; VI (1914), 739-41; XI (1917), 1045-48; XII (1917), 717-20; XX (1921), 532-36; and (December, 1944), 86-93.

76. Running parallel to the industry's laudatory articles on coal towns was a persistent stream of criticism. See Arthur Gleason, "Company Owned Americans," *Nation*, 110 (1920), 794 f.; Helen G. Norton, "Feudalism in West Virginia," *Nation*, XIII (1931), 154 f.; Jennie Lee, "Kentucky Through English Eyes," *Living Age*, 342 (1932), 184 f.; Bruce Crawford, "Piney Ridge, Virginia," *Virginia Quarterly Review*, VIII (1932), 371-84; Helen Hall, "Miners Must Eat," *Atlantic*, CLII (1933), 153-62; and Adelaide Walker, "Living Conditions in the Coal Fields," in Dreiser (ed.), *Harlan Miners Speak*, pp. 83 ff.

77. Joseph H. White, *Houses for Mining Towns*. U.S. Bureau of Mines Bulletin No. 87 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914), pp. 48 f.

thoughts on tyranny

by Stoney Cooks



It probably was not more than two complete months before the November 7, 1972, election when two young and unknown reporters for the *Washington Post* followed a sound lead to Alex B. Shipley, a Democrat who is now an assistant attorney general in Tennessee. According to Shipley, he had been offered employment and assurances of even greater upward mobility by the convicted agent-provocateur Donald H. Segretti. This was the first real break in the whole sordid affair we now know as "The Watergate Mess." Heretofore, only the bag men had been hauled into court—the best was yet to come.

The *Washington Post* has rightly received much notoriety for its role in unfolding much of what we know about corruption in the White House, but like most everything else in Washington, D.C., the leadership was slow and fearful to move. Through luck and persistence, these two reporters unraveled an almost unimaginable, nearly-executed fascist coup d'état. It began as a burglary that turned out to be one of a series of burglaries violating the private lives of individuals and institutions. We learn of secret campaign funds, and later we discover the largest extortion ring in modern history receives its orders from the White House. Then comes information of collusion of other governmental agencies—the CIA, the FBI, the Justice Department, the IRS, the FCC, and who knows how many others yet unnamed. The web of complicity leads beyond government to some of the most powerful corporations in the nation, as illegal campaign contributions and influence peddling charges entangle ITT, Goodyear, Gulf Oil, American Airlines. . . .

A paranoid President and three of his top aides are in a helicopter flying from Los Angeles to San Clemente. The *New York Times* has just printed a

secret Pentagon history of the Vietnam war, and they fear that Daniel Ellsberg, the former Defense official who says he turned the documents over to the press, may give still more vital secrets, perhaps the American nuclear targeting plan, to the Russians. The four men discuss setting up an undercover operation, by-passing the FBI, to find out all about Mr. Ellsberg and stop potential leaks. From this scenario flows the origins of the Plumbers, a Mission Impossible-like squad.

One of the participants in the airborne discussion in mid-July, 1971, was John Ehrlichman, and his sworn testimony that he never approved burglarizing the files of Mr. Ellsberg's psychiatrist and learned of the break-in plan only after it was implemented, has now been contradicted by one of the plumbers, David Young. Young testified to detailed discussions with Ehrlichman on plans for the break-in before the burglary took place on September 3, 1971. The crucial question is whether Ehrlichman, to avoid a long jail sentence or to even things because of what he no doubt has read in the transcripts concerning "P" and "H" (Nixon and Haldeman) scheming against him, may decide to cooperate with the prosecutors.

It is common knowledge that H.R. Haldeman, the President's Chief of Staff and the highly effective guardian of the President's time, appears to have supervised and been kept informed of all campaign affairs, from property improvements at San Clemente to the various devices used to suppress the opposition. John Mitchell, the law-and-order Attorney General and President's

Stoney Cooks is administrative assistant to Congressman Andrew Young from Atlanta, Georgia, and a former staff member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

campaign manager, approved illegal domestic wiretaps and the espionage plan and made decisions at the Justice Department that favored big contributors. These men were hand picked by the President. He should be criminally liable under law for all the acts carried out by them.

Another participant in the July, 1971, conversation was Henry "fly me" Kissinger. His sworn testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that he did not know of the existence of the plumbers and that he finds the whole idea deplorable has been characterized by a former White House official as "Bull."

The fourth man to agree to transfer Mr. Young from the National Security staff to the plumbers was Richard Nixon. From the tapes and testimony, Nixon emerges as a man who put the plumbers in business out of a sense of alarm over the Ellsberg episode, which he equated with the Alger Hiss case. "I want every son of a bitch in the State Department polygraphed until you find the guy," he is quoted as having said after a leak about the SALT talks. "I don't give a good goddamn about that; it's more important to find the source of these leaks rather than worry about the civil rights of some bureaucrats."

Nixon took office in the midst of bitter national dissent over the Vietnam war and wholesale neglect in terms of domestic policy. Nixon's inauguration was marked by counter-inaugurals and anti-war protest as the war went on. The dissent of young people in the street, criticism from most other quarters, and the persistent questioning in the public press and broadcast media became intolerable to the President. John Dean, Counsel to the President, described the atmosphere in the White House:

I was made aware of the President's strong feelings about even the smallest of demonstrations during the late winter of 1971, when the President happened to look out the windows of the residence of the White House and saw a lone man with a large ten-foot sign stretched out in front of Lafayette Park. Mr. Higby called me to his office to tell me of the President's displeasure with the sign in the park and told me that Mr. Haldeman said the sign had to come down. When I came out of Mr. Higby's office, I ran into Mr. Dwight Chapin who said that he was going to get some "thugs" to remove that man from Lafayette Park. He said it would take him a few hours to get them, but they could do the job.

We observe daily the painful but steady disintegration of the power that once was the White House. For weeks, the President and his aides have

been saying that the Watergate tapes eventually would establish "beyond question" that Mr. Nixon is innocent of wrongdoing. In fact, so many of them now turn out to be either blank or nonexistent that what's left has become practically worthless as a means of proving anything favorable to the President.

The President continues to come to the rapidly disappearing majority of voters who placed him in The White House promising a new era of openness and new commitments to get it all over with.

With impeachment proceedings moving on with purposeful speed and most of the ugly drama promising to climax with the elections of this Fall, those who would want to preserve constitutional freedoms ought only to place a book marker carefully between those pages of history. For certainly this is only the clap of thunder that almost destiny-like precedes the storm.



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BOOK REVIEWS

False Promises, by Stanley Aronowitz. McGraw-Hill, \$10.00.

Subtitled "the shaping of American working class consciousness," *False Promises* is an attempt to explain the development of and current status of the American worker as the product of a variety of forces including the more traditional categories of schools, family and religion plus the newer intervention of mass culture. Aronowitz begins the work by discarding both the right wing idea that American capitalism has met the aspirations of the workers' human needs and its left wing counterpart that what has prevented the liberation of working people is their betrayal by their own leaders in the trade unions and in the left wing parties. In this critical view, the inadequacy of traditional methods of change is made clear by showing their inability to confront the whole spectrum of forces and events which serve to create the social beings who inhabit modern civilization.

The introduction to the book is a brief theoretical summary of the work-culture arrangement in the molding of consciousness which cites the primacy of commodity relations in determining the social reality of American capitalism. Care is taken to see that this emphasis on the production relations is not interpreted as the end of analysis but as the vital starting point. It is Aronowitz's very sensible view that whatever occurs in the culture bears a close relationship to the dominant means of commodity production in the society. Production then provides the "why" of social organization, but it is cultural factors which are the "how."

A look at the latest popular

example of industrial alienation, the new General Motors Lordstown, Ohio, plant is then included. Better than most such studies, Aronowitz tries to reflect the reality of the situation at Lordstown by quoting the workers' own opinions of the plant and their lives. It is in this section that the book's only emphasis on Southerners appears, in the mention of the Appalachian workers as an ethnic component in the Lordstown work force. The Appalachians are seen as the product of the depression in the coalfields which began in the fifties and which resulted in the migration of young people into the industrial regions of the midwest. Even though the perfidy of labor leaders is discounted as a major factor in American working class history in the work as a whole, the role of John L. Lewis in the creation of the coal depression is pointed out.

Aronowitz finds much that is hopeful at Lordstown in terms of new forms of resistance to the alienating culture in which we find ourselves. The resistance of the younger workers to the traditional forms of amelioration, such as high pay and job security, and their relentless battle against alienation, boredom and hierarchy, is portrayed as containing the potential for a new struggle against the whole culture of latter-day capitalism. Unfortunately, neither Aronowitz nor anyone else can specify at this point exactly what the particular nature of that combat will be. Only in the inadequacy of traditional forms, the left wing political organization and the trade union, is Aronowitz on firm ground. For proposing new forms and methods we must turn to future history, not a particularly comforting

prospect. But as future history is a product of the forces which have culminated in the past, a reexamination of that past, with an emphasis on the economically-based cultural development, is in order. Most of the remainder of *False Promises* is an attempt at such an examination from two complementary viewpoints: the principal one is an objective study of American working class history in the age of industrialization, the other an honest and fascinating subjective history of the work life of Stanley Aronowitz in the post-World War II industrial northeast.

In the extensive history of the industrial working class, the needs of Capital are drawn to loom large in events; cultural change is seen as a response to those needs, a response altered by interaction within the working class culture to be sure, but a response nonetheless.

For example, the steel industry has relied on the multi-lingual ethnic workers for the bulk of its labor force after the turn of the century because their docility was assured by the immigrant's natural insecurity in the new land and by the language difficulties barring the communication essential to organization. With the coming of World War I the situation changed as unionism was admitted into the steel industry as a way to assure labor's support for the war effort. When steel decided to dispense with unions after Armistice, the largest industrial conflagration up to that time broke out in the Steel Strike of 1919. Into this situation the steel companies began the wholesale importation of Negro labor from the South in order to break the newly forged solidarity of the strikers. Thus was launched the cultural phenomenon of the dispersion of the Black masses from the South, a movement profoundly affecting both host and donor areas, the course of which has yet to run in full. A large number of other similar cultural events are examined in the book, thus providing a much more complete view of American workers as a class than has been afforded by the traditional academic and institutional histories.

This history commences with the formation of the industrial working

class as it grew from the agricultural population of 19th century America. The growth and changes of that class are charted with views of the role of immigration, the changing status of women in various eras, and the participation and forms of trade unionism. The recent development of the so-called "new working class" in the service and public sector is dealt with in the final portions. While a study of this type obviously cannot be complete within the confines of format such as that provided by *False Promises*, an excellent beginning is made, particularly when taken in concert with such classics as Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* and such recent theoretical examinations of changing capitalism like O'Connor's *Fiscal Crisis of the State*.

The personal history of Stanley Aronowitz, his life and work, is an excellent counterpoint to the broader view which precedes it in *False Promises*. Aronowitz recounts his life from his early involvement with the Left and his abortive career as a college student. His drift into industrial employment seems to take the path followed by most people, as economic necessity forces personal expectations into the ever tightening confines of the American working class reality. The utter futility of curiosity, ambition and even morality is clearly shown in the stultifying world of industry, particularly when that industry is the result of mean necessity. Even his attempt to break out, by following the well trod route of trade union bureaucracy, is a study in proscribed limitations. The only reward that is tangible through it all is simply hope born out of frustration which is doomed to founder on still more frustration.

If Aronowitz paints a gloomy picture of today's America, at least he doesn't leave in despair. In a final section entitled "The New Workers," he looks at the work force of the sixties and seventies as radically different from their predecessors. Left behind are many of the constraints imposed by race, ethnicity, economic insecurity and bogus ideology. The new workers, trained at a much higher level than their

forebearers, have new and qualitatively different expectations of life. The anti-social nature of appropriation of wealth in America is growing more and more irrational with the passing of each day and the producers of that wealth are equipped as no other generation to comprehend and assess that reality. Even as the forces which seek to distort humanity in America—consumerism, hierarchical organization and vapid mass culture—seem to grow, the realization that these values are fetters on development also becomes more apparent. Aronowitz sees our ability to change history as a real possibility, but operating within limits:

The chief method of our work ought to be to discover the roots of the revolt, while at the same time facing up to the obstacles presented by the social order. We are obliged to courageously re-examine every article of faith and be prepared to abandon it. If social theory does not remain critical of itself, it is sure to ossify into dogma. Of course there is no need to jettison a fundamental commitment to social change. Equally dangerous however, is a commitment to political judgments that have been surpassed in history.

Neill Herring
Atlanta

●

The Deep South States of America, by Neal R. Peirce. W. W. Norton, 1974, 528 pp., \$12.95.

Who built the seven towers of Thebes?
The books are filled with the names of kings.

Was it kings who hauled the craggy blocks of stone? . . .

In the evening when the Chinese wall was finished

Where did the masons go? . . .
—Bertolt Brecht

Neal Peirce has written a paean to Liberal Progress in the South. His book is filled with the names of kings. Or rather with the names of their contemporary counterparts, corporate executives and their politicians.

His concern is not with the goings of a shirt-factory mother leaving her family of a morning. His survey does not tell us where the miner goes of an evening.

The Deep South States of America comes as the fourth and most recently completed in a "descriptive" series of books by this Washington journalist on regional groupings of American states. The volume profiles the seven southern-most states—arching from Arkansas through the Gulf coastal states to Florida, thence northward again through South Carolina. "Inspired" by John Gunther's *Inside U.S.A.*, Peirce's book is grounded on a conception of "fantastic economic growth." His perspective is clear:

. . . [Inside U.S.A.] is a quarter of a century old; it was written before the fantastic economic and population growth of the postwar era, growth that has transformed the face of this land and altered the life of its people and lifted us to heights of glory and depths of national despair beyond our wildest past dreams.

Growth? . . . What kind? . . . For whose profit? . . . And by whose labor?

The third Wednesday in May, 1974: Drizzle falls from the gray of a Birmingham sky to the silver of a puddled sidewalk. Inside the Kahler Plaza Hotel the kings of finance who rule the Southern Company, a four-state utility holding company, are staging their annual stockholders' meeting. Outside walk some 500 men, wearing the hard hats of underground miners or CAT hats of surface coal men. Their family sedans and pickup trucks parked around the corner watch mutely as airport limousines pass to discharge carefully dressed stockholders.

These men are striking out at a threat to their livelihood. Members of the United Mine Workers of America District 20 (Alabama), they have learned that the Southern Company plans to import coal from South Africa some 9000 miles away. Rich seams of coal lie under Alabama's red-clay hills less than 200 miles from the proposed port-of-entry in Mobile. This move will underwrite South African conscription of blacks to dig coal upon penalty of removal from their homeland if they

refuse the work. But this will displace 375 Alabama jobs. No, we don't want you to haul these craggy blocks anymore, answer the corporate kings. This will facilitate growth . . . you understand. Metropolitan New York financial institutions are the ten largest stockholders in the Southern Company.

It's hard to get a handle on Peirce's idea of growth. For, while he claims . . . *Deep South States* . . . to be primarily descriptive, there's a lot of pickin' and choosin' that goes into what one deems worthy of describing. His column inches belie his caveats. Twenty-eight pages describe Atlanta, overlaid with glittering images of Tom Cousins' and John Portman's entrepreneurial architecture.

But folks in Cabbagetown, a white working-class community, know better. They know somebody somewhere is making some money off their labors, and off their monthly power bills. And Peirce's response is something about some government somewhere helping these people out. Build 'em some housing "units." For his measures of growth and progress always come down to numbers, numbers like "percentage of population involved in manufacturing" or ". . . living in an urban area." But, where do the masons want to go?

Peirce's short sight is curious. Because even the numbers alone tell the story. Implicitly, he sees post-Civil-War Southern economic history as a wrenching of the profits of Southern resources away from those workers who produced them. He writes of a Southern "ruling class" reasserting its interests after defeat in the Civil War by "exploitation of both the poor white and the Negro." W.J. Cash's understanding that "the effect [of Civil-War defeat] was to transplant the plantation system from the cotton field to the cotton mill" gets a nod from Peirce. In the end his cloak of "description" falls to the editorial room floor. Peirce will not confront the contradiction of Peachtree Street's towers and Cabbagetown's frustration: an international barter of human lives and labors for the economic gain of a few.

Joseph Persky's work, *The South:*

A Colony at Home (Southern Exposure, Summer-Fall '73) faces this contradiction. Within he quotes Belgian economist Andre Gorz:

. . . the geographical concentration of the process of capitalist accumulation has necessarily gone hand-in-hand with the relative—or even absolute—impoverishment of other regions [e.g. the South]. These latter regions have been used by the industrial and financial centers as reservoirs of labor, or primary and agricultural material. Like the colonies of the great European empires, the 'peripheral' regions have provided the metropolises with their savings, their labor-power, their men, without having a right to the local reinvestment of the capital accumulated through their activity.

Framed with this perspective, Mississippi's response to the Depression of the '30's—seconded by every other Southern state—sharpens into perspective. Their dogged push for "industrial development" heightened the South's dependence on Eastern finance capital. The region can do no more than (quoting Persky) "receive the spin-off of older industries from the metropolitan center, but not generate or quickly partake in the dynamic phases of innovative cycles." Second fiddle. . . but humbly grateful just to be in the band.

Failing to understand this economic dependence, Peirce can only rehash the traditional skirmishes of supposedly warring political parties. But from the Compromise of 1876 to the military Keynesianism of 1974, Southern politicians have kept black and white apart—to the profit of Eastern capitalism, and their own electoral fortunes. The crumbs falling down this way have been an adjunctive role in capitalism, Eastern style. Not only the fruits of our labors, but a meaningful politics has been our loss. For in the South of the '70's, skirmishes between the Scoundrel's Party and the newly emerging Thieves' Party turn only on which will administer the established order.

But who are the real kings, Mr. Peirce? . . . Where do they hold court? . . . And who builds the towers of Peachtree Street? . . . And where will

the masons go? . . .

Jim Tramel
Atlanta

The Roots of Southern Writing, by C. Hugh Holman. University of Georgia Press, 236 pp., \$10.00.

This collection of essays is a good dose for those individuals who have either a "provincial" or a "unified" conception of Southern literature. By "provincial" we mean a Local Color literature, a writing content to aim only at place, speech or custom. By "unified" we refer to one notion of a unified South, that of a South whose climate, landscape and people have been homogeneous enough to call forth some few stereotypes from writers widely separated in time and space.

Holman maintains that there are three Souths—the Tidewater, the Piedmont, and the "semi-tropical Deep South." The writers of these areas, he feels, have responded differently to the problem of environment, and to the greater region's history: one might consider the differences of tone and characterization among Ellen Glasgow, Thomas Wolfe and William Faulkner. Holman's criticism, then, is partly social and historical, concerned with the "physical, social and moral environment" behind a work of art, and with the biography of the artists. He is interested in the "inter-relationships of history and fiction"—as his extensive reference to C. Vann Woodward's *Burden of Southern History* suggests.

The major part of *The Roots of Southern Writing* is concerned with developing a thematic pattern out of the diversity of Southern literature. Southerners generally share an interest in the past, and a sensitivity to agricultural and racial myths. The whole South has known an all-encompassing experience which, drawing Southerners together, has set them apart from the rest of the nation. Vann Woodward calls this the long experience of "defeat and failure," a fall from grandeur, or from certainty at least. During the long years of social and industrial

rebuilding, the ruined Old South exerted a lingering pull upon the mind of the New—the “changed”—South; when the generation of World War I matured, they confronted the first break in the continuity of Southern life since Reconstruction. In their re-evaluation of myths (old and new), values, and change, a literary explosion took place, the Southern Renaissance. Again, consider Ellen Glasgow’s ironic treatment and chronicle of social order in the Tidewater; Wolfe’s ambiguous praise of the New South in the democratic Piedmont; Faulkner’s fable of the patterned fall of a social and moral dream. On a very broad level we have three interpretations of the same theme: the changing of an old order and the effect of change upon social values.

Most Southerners have been pessimistic regarding man’s potential for happiness, his ability to preserve—or create—a good society. But, we read, this Calvinistic perception has come across to readers of Southern fiction in panoramas of human dignity and responsibility. Consider Ellen Glasgow’s remark, “One may learn to live, “blood and iron.” An awareness of this dimension of choice, says Holman, has prevented Southern writers from creating naturalistic puppets. Moreover, considering that the South is generally a class-one may even learn to live gallantly, without delight.” Man is doomed to failure and sadness. But men fail in

the most tragic sense only when they abandon human responsibilities, only when they refuse Miss Glasgow’s conscious section, it is notable that the human dignity of characters may have little to do with the question of their cultivation. Faulkner’s shiftless Burdens (*As I Lay Dying*) battle the odor of death to fulfill a duty; his Dilsey (*The Sound and the Fury*) handles a hive of deterioration and endures.

Holman’s whole conception of a literature emerging from the intensely local experience, almost of a past history—and shaped in the struggle to achieve a social order in the face of dampened promise—succeeds best in analysis of Faulkner’s books. Flannery O’Connor’s grotesques, Wolfe’s cosmic autobiography, the Fugitives’ conscious use of a mythic agrarian tradition, even Simms’ pattern of South Carolina history—all these fall more or less within the scheme, but none so completely as do the Master’s works. All of these writers except Simms experienced what Louis Rubin calls a momentous “distancing” from the unquestioning loyalty which the South demands of her citizens. Faulkner, however, balances the myths of an Old South and the tensions of the New, in such a way as to encompass, virtually, the crises of “modernizing” of the Southern mind, the Southern social order, and the Southern landscape. And only Ellen Glasgow’s treatment of a numbed Tidewater fits as well the implications of Holman’s

literature of the subterranean South.

Holman is a perceptive historical critic, and his observations on the quality of Southern life are most interesting. Particularly fruitful from an historical or a literary viewpoint is his explanation of social paradox as a basic tension, a duty, almost, within the Southern way of life. Holman contends that Southerners are able to live more easily with paradoxical situations than any other group of Americans:

Approach it however you will, you will find at the heart of the Southern riddle a union of opposites, a condition of instability, a paradox. Calm grace and raw hatred. Polished manners and violence. . . . A reverence to the point of idolatry of self-determining action and a caste and class structure presupposing an aristocratic hierarchy. . . . A region breeding both Thomas Jefferson and John C. Calhoun. If these contradictions are to be brought into focus. . . it must be through the “reconciliation of opposites.” And the reconciliation of opposites, as Coleridge has told us, is the function of the poet.

Finally, although the major Southern writers have written about concrete and limited settings—from Simms’ South Carolina to O’Connor’s “country” to Faulkner’s “postage stamp” of Mississippi—they have not striven for a provincial literature. Thomas Wolfe, whose descriptions were presented with such a “lyrical intensity. . . [as to] impinge upon the senses of the reader,” struggled to be a representative man. Faulkner strove to create a “reduplicating” pattern of life wherein characters larger than life acted out a moral drama. Earlier, Poe and Simms had worked within the Young America movement to create a national literature out of sectional roots. Simms merged history and fiction to fashion a comprehensive account of the American Revolution in South Carolina. He said, “To be national in literature, one must needs be sectional.” Southern words have been pulled like rooted plants from the soil—but for a “dark, ruined” land, the South has produced a writing of broad appeal.

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Certainly one fault of *The Roots of Southern Writing* is that, while such early writers as William Gilmore Simms are discussed in detail, the larger implications of the book are most convincing from Ellen Glasgow on. *The Roots of Southern Writing*, still, is an important book. C. Hugh Holman has traced many of the mythical, historical and local traces in the large imprint that is Southern literature.

Paul Pruitt, Jr.
Tifton, Georgia

Historical Statistics of the South, 1790-1970, by Donald B. Dodd & Wynelle S. Dodd. University of Alabama Press, cloth \$7.75, paper \$3.95.

A very convenient, though obviously incomplete, source of most of the important agricultural, industrial and demographic statistics of sixteen southern states. Statistics on agricultural production, ownership, value and numbers are provided. For industry, data is given on wages, capitalization of manufacturing establishments, value of products and value added, among other things. Population figures are given by race, as well as by urban-rural classifications.

The Bench and the Ballot: Southern Federal Judges and Black Voters, by Charles V. Hamilton. Oxford University Press, 258 pp., \$7.95.

A study of the role of five federal judges in four southern states in the shaping of voting rights procedures and the impact of such rulings on our current situation in the South.

The Study and Analysis of Black Politics: A Bibliography, by Hanes Walton. Scarecrow Press, 161 pp., \$6.00

Professor Walton of Savannah State College has assembled this bibliography on a wide range of topics covering everything from political socialization, political parties and elections to political science methodology, urban politics and public policy.

Working: What People Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do, Louis "Studs" Terkel Random House-Pantheon. 589 pp. \$10.00.

Louis "Studs" Terkel, noted Chicago radio personality, has spent the past couple of years traveling about talking to people about their work. From the hundreds of interviews, he has compiled *Working: What People Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do*, another book in the established tradition of *Division Street: America* and *Hard Times*. In this book the American working person at all class levels speaks his/her mind. The result is one of the most realistic looks at American life that has been published for quite a while. The reader will ignore its message at his peril. While most of the interviews are located in the Great Lakes area, the warning that this book sounds is as universal as it is inescapable: work is hell for the majority of Americans, from janitor to corporation president.

Terkel, who took his nickname from James T. Farrell's mythical Lonigan, indulges in no pious moralizing or sociological jargonizing. In fact as befits a book of this nature, the interviewer is hardly visible. His unobtrusiveness belies his deft control over the entire book, although it is hard to imagine that any serious personalized polling of American attitudes about work could arrive at any other distillation and be any closer to the elemental truth of the alienating and generally negative nature of work in America.

However, Terkel is not pessimistic in the face of his findings. He looks forward to a re-birth of self-pride and a rejuvenation of the American spirit. It seems only too evident from these pages, nonetheless that as long as those who produce and those who labor lack control over their work, both in its manner and its content, there can be no real pride in work. "As long as the power brokers are specific about production, and abstract about workers," to quote a

Terkel radio interview, it is hard to envision any change in this attitude on the part of business. Work is not designed to be human in today's America; as in any system consciously manipulated and controlled by and for great concentration of power and capital, human needs and desires fall far behind in the race for profits. Of special interest are a series of interviews with some people in the auto industry, including two line workers, a plant manager, and the president of the UAW local at Lordstown, the anomie-plagued assembly plant of tomorrow. *Working* on the line at Ford isn't anything you look forward to in the morning, but you keep hoping for 30 and out. Phil Stallings, spot welder (all Terkel's people are pseudonyms unless they are well-known personalities) sums it up: Proud of my work? How can I feel pride in a job where I call a foreman's attention to a mistake, a bad piece of equipment, and he'll ignore it. Pretty soon you get the idea they don't care.

Tom Brand, manager of the same plant sees it somewhat differently: If I could get everybody at the plant to look at everything through my eyeballs, we'd have a lot of the problems licked. Mr. Brand's idea of the best single standard is revealed in the words of Wheeler Stanley, hot-shot general foreman of the plant:

Prior to going on supervision you think hourly. But when you become management, you have to look out for the company's best interests. You always have to present a management attitude. Being young and eager to please, he even lets us in on a peek at this management attitude: In the old days, when they fought for the union, they might have needed the union then. But now the company is just as good to them as the union is. Gary Bryner, president of the Lordstown UAW local, doesn't look back to his days on the line so blithely: I don't give a shit what anybody says, it was boring, monotonous work. The almighty dollar is not the only thing in my estimation—it's how you're treated. What I have to say about what I do, how I do it.

Terkel's respondents' attitudes bring to mind the outlook expressed by industrial workers in the latter part of the 19th century. People are aware of their exploitation, but are unable to see themselves as part of an exploited class. Their inchoate ideas as to the origins of their oppression preclude any real analysis of the conditions under which they live and toil. Working people are trapped in a system which produces vast quantities of useless items by the use of inhuman organization of that production—at the assembly plant or at the stockbroker's office.

Many find it impossible to integrate their personal lives with what they do during their working hours. The level of alienation reaches heights which effectively render a person dysfunctional as a human being. This phenomenon is especially evident among the young. Charlie Blossom's response to his job as a copy boy at a large Chicago newspaper was simply to kneel for hours in a samurai position in front of the religion editor's desk. Many follow Blossom's example and just bail out. To hell with the loss of status; what's this business about self-respect and fulfillment? I'm chained to a machine all day, and you expect me not to day-dream? You expect me to be enthused about being a beast of burden? Increasingly these questions are being asked by American working people. As the disintegration continues, it is to be fervently hoped that they will become demands.

But the American Dream hangs on. Two cars, house in Suburbia, color TV. Maybe if we have those, our lives will somehow be more alive. It is only when a person can take pride, individually or collectively, in the fruit of his labors, and see his hand in its value, that work brings satisfaction. Carl Nurray Bates, 40 years a stonemason: *It's a pretty good day laying stone or brick. Not tiring. Anything you like to do isn't tiresome. It's hard work, stone is heavy. At the same time, you get interested in what you're doing and you usually fight the clock the other way. You're not lookin' for quittin'. I can't imagine a job where you go home and maybe go*

by a year later and you don't know what you've done. My work, I can see what I did the day I started. It's something I can see the rest of my life. It's always there.

But Americans seem to wallow in their surfeit of goods and lack of human rewards. Popular consciousness has become another commodity to be packaged and marketed to the public. May Day has become Law Day, as Labor Day sees family picnics and carnage on the highways rather than parades and other expressions of unity by working people. And Christmas has become a boom period of consumption, rather than a holiday season celebrating our hopes for human perfectability.

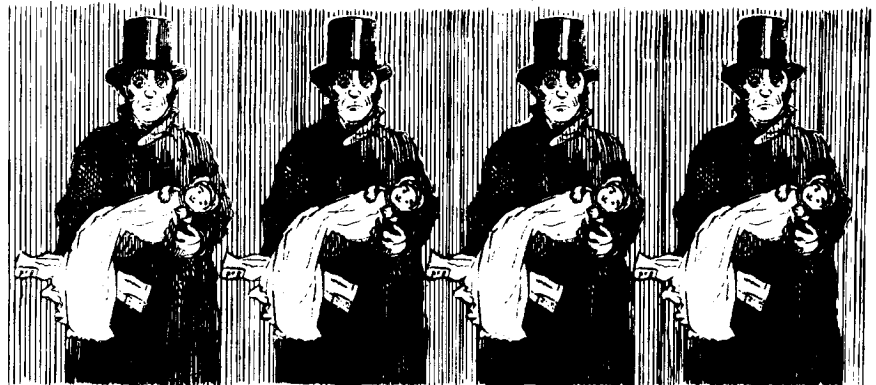
Terkel understands this: *This book, being about work, is by its very nature about violence—to the spirit as well as to the body. It is about ulcers as well as accidents, about shouting matches as well as fistfights, about nervous breakdowns as well as kicking the dog around. It is above all [or beneath all], about daily humiliations. To survive a day is triumph enough for the walking wounded among the great many of us.*

One can only hope that we, too, can understand this and move to remedy it. This book is a valuable tool for throwing light on work, the major crime of our age.

Ed Martin
Atlanta

Berkeley Journal of Sociology

A Critical Review Vol. xviii 1973-74



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The BERKELEY JOURNAL OF SOCIOLOGY encourages scholarship in radical sociology and in critical alternatives to contemporary social theories. A special effort is made to publish papers written by graduate students and untenured faculty.

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Nine of God's capitalist spokesmen are examined: Oral Roberts, Billy James Hargis, Kathryn Kuhlman, Burpo, A.A. Allen, McIntyre, the Pasadena Armstrongs, Dr. Frederick Eikerenkotter, and Billy Graham. According to this treatment of fundamentalism and right-wing politics, what these "one man" denominations have in common is their passion for the Bible and real estate.

Contains some interesting tidbits from Ervin's career, but nothing new is revealed about his Watergate work, and the greatest disappointment of all is the failure to reckon with the contradictions of a man who loves the Constitution but has been blind to civil rights legislation and the Fourteenth Amendment.

Over 20 historians including George Tindall and C. Vann Woodward examine the role of myth in Southern history.

An anthology divided into five sections: Jewish life in the antebellum and Confederate South, Jews in the New South, Southerners view the Jew, Life in the Twentieth-Century South, and Jews and desegregation. Some information is given on Jewish communities in several southern cities. Unfortunately the book is not indexed and contains only a scant four-page "Bibliographical Essay."

As an old *Commercial Appeal* reader, I found many of the cartoons that raised my ire in the past: Martin Luther King, Jr., portrayed as an evil trick-or-treater before being shot down in the fair city; opposition to school desegregation in Little Rock; interracial trouble attributed to Russian Communism rather than American racism. Alley gets off easy in Crawford's text. The central question of whether a cartoonist is obligated to mirror the often reactionary views of an audience or is responsible to a higher ideal is scarcely mentioned. The "objective" summarizing of Alley's political orientation by Crawford is hardly needed after a brief glance at the cartoons themselves. Still the book is an important contribution to the understanding of the movement of a city and a region from the external threats of the 40's to the internal problems of the 60's.

Organized chronologically, the book examines the origins, develop-

Evans offers a selective history of southern Jewry and the role of Jews in southern history—a role which he contends was important though largely unrecognized. His discussion of the racial attitudes and close ties between blacks and Jews and his contention that for the most part Jews were an accepted part of the southern political scene are certain to provide fuel for no small number of debates in the future.

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Periodicals

Bluegrass Unlimited, P.O. Box 111, Burke, Virginia 22015, \$6 per year.

Country Music, P.O. Box 2560, Boulder, Colorado 80302, \$6.95 per year.

Disc Collector Newsletter, P.O. Box 169, Cheswold, Del. 19936, \$2 per year.

Journal of Country Music, Country Music Foundation, 16th Avenue, South, Nashville, Tenn.

Muleskinner News, Rt. 2, Box 304, Elon College, N.C. 27244, \$6 per year.
Sing Out!, 106 West 28th Street, N.Y., N.Y. 10001, \$6 per year.

Southern, Eileen. *Music of Black Americans: A History*. Norton, 1971, \$10.00, paper \$4.45.

We Shall Overcome: Songs of the Southern Freedom Movement. Oak Publications, \$1.95.

Other Resources

The Ozark Access Catalog is a newspaper/magazine indexing tools, services, and survival skills aimed at life in the Ozarks. Advancing regional awareness through information about the area and about skills necessary for rural life, the *Catalog* would be useful in other rural situations as well. Subscriptions are \$5 per year, from Ozark Access Center, P.O. Box 506, Eureka Springs, Arkansas 72632.

United Front Press, P.O. Box 40099, San Francisco, Calif. 94140, is a non-profit publishing and distribution center providing "accurate information on the true history and current struggles of the American people." Their free 1974 catalogue lists pamphlets on workers and Third World people in the US, Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, on women, monopoly capitalism, the energy industry, ecology and GI's.

Cut Cane Associates, P.O. Box 98, Mineral Bluff, Ga. 30559, offers a number of publications from four to ninety pages in length of use to southern organizers and those interested in Appalachia and southern music. A sample of present titles includes: "Foundations and Appalachia," "Property Taxes: What to Look For and Where to Find It," "Mountain Textiles," and "Woodcutters Songbook." Excerpts from a recently published study of the National Forest in Appalachia will be published in the next issue of *Southern Exposure*, and the full report is available now for \$1.00.

Books

Charters, Samuel. *Bluesmen*. Quick Fox, \$7.95, paper \$4.95

Green, Archie. *Only A Miner: Studies in Recorded Coal-Miners Songs*. \$12.50

Heilbut, Tony. *Gospel Sound: Good News and Bad Times*. Simon and Schuster, 1971, \$7.95.

Hemphill, Paul. *The Nashville Sound: Bright Lights and Country Music*. Simon and Schuster, 1970.

Jones, Bessie, and Hawes, Bess L. *Step It Down: Games, Plays, Songs, and Stories of Afro-American Heritage*. Harper and Row, 1972, \$10.00.

Jones, LeRoi. *Blues People: Negro Music in White America*. Morrow, 1963, \$7.95, paper \$1.95.

Korson, George. *Coal Dust on the Fiddle*. \$10.00.

Lomax, Alan. *Folk Songs of North America*. Doubleday and Co.

Lomax, Alan; Guthrie, Woody; Seeger, Pete. *Hard Hitting Songs for Hard-Hit People*. \$12.50.

Lovell, John. *Black Song: The Forge and the Flame*. Macmillan, 1972, \$15.00.

Oliver, Paul. *Aspects of the Blues Tradition*, Quick Fox, 1970, \$6.95; *The Story of the Blues*, Chilton, 1973, \$12.50 paper \$4.95; *Meaning of the Blues*, Macmillan, 1962, paper \$.95; *Savannah Syncopators: African Retentions in the Blues*, Stein and Day, 1970, \$4.95, paper \$1.95; Bessie Smith, A.S. Barnes, 1961, paper \$.95.

Shelton, Robert, and Goldblatt, Burt. *The Country Music Story: A Picture History of Country and Western Music*. Bobbs-Merrill, \$7.50.

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Peoples Energy is the newsletter of the Movement for Peoples Power, 1520 New Hampshire Ave., Washington, D.C. 20036, a loose network of energy organizers and researchers which grew out of the February Citizens Energy Conference in Washington. The second issue (June) will focus on model legislative bills promoting public ownership of the energy resources and distribution system.

The excellent power structure study, Nashville's *Rich Rob the Roost*, mentioned in our Vol. 1, No. 2 issue, is available from the people who wrote and published it—as well as back issues of their newspaper: *The Real Dirt*, P.O. Box 12531, Acklen Station, Nashville, Tenn. 37212.

Land of Giant Flowers, a full-sized children's book, written as a fictional diary from a non-sexist, anti-imperialist perspective, is available from Workers Graphics, P.O. Box 903, Tallahassee, Florida 32302. The book tells the story of Nguyen, a young Vietnamese girl and how she is affected by the war. The story line, however, is secondary to the fine graphic illustrations of Miles Stryker. Workers Graphics, according to Stryker, "grew out of the simple observation that as the workers' movement developed, the need for art forms which served that movement would also develop."

The *Appalachian South Folklife Center*, P.O. Box 5, Pipestem, West Virginia, is an Appalachian cultural center that publishes the *Appalachian South* magazine, sponsors the Pipestem Folk Festival, operates a mountain museum, and hosts several summer camp sessions for young people. Recently, one of the Center's main buildings that housed many of the museum's items burned down. Contributions are needed to help rebuild the museum. For further information, write Don West at the address above.

The *Southern Appalachian Ministry in Higher Education* is a network of people in and around community colleges in the southern mountains, including teachers and students, community folk, organizers, clergy and laypeople, and a staff headquartered at 1538 Highland Avenue, Knoxville, Tenn. 37916. SAM is concerned with how community colleges affect economic development, health and tax problems, land reform, strip mining, collective bargaining, and racial and sexual equality. Resources include a monthly newsletter (free), literature, films, speakers, music-makers, seminars, and research on special issues.

Grass Roots is the monthly publication for the People's Party, "a national coalition of autonomous state and local organizations working together to provide radical electoral and non-electoral alternatives—dependent of, and in opposition to the two capitalist parties. . . ." Subscriptions are available from Grass Roots, 1065 31st Street NW, Georgetown, Washington, D.C. 20007, for \$5 a year.

Newsletter of the Democratic Left publishes articles on a wide variety of political topics, international and national, of interest to socialists and others on the left. Edited by Michael Harrington and published monthly (except July and August), subscriptions at \$5 per year may be sent to Newsletter, 125 West 77th St., New York, N.Y. 10024.

A recent monthly issue of the *Appalachian News Service* contained six feature articles: "IBEW Challenged by Rank-and-File Insurgents," "Restrictions Coming On Windfall Profits," "Energy Decisions Affect Appalachian Coalfields," "Hospital Workers Continue Pikeville Strike," "Blacksville Creates Medical Services From Scratch," and "TVA's Help Criticized." Subscriptions are available by sending a tax-deductible contribution of at least \$12.50 (individual) or \$25.00 (organizations)

made out to The Youth Project-Appalachian Media Research Project, and addressed to ANS, PO Box 2921, Charleston, W. Va. 25530.

CSM Bookstore, CPO Box 2307, Berea, Ky. 40403, has the largest collection of resources on Appalachia, past and present. Send 25 cents for a catalog of books, film, records, videotapes, pamphlets, magazines—all available by mail-order from the Council of Southern Mountains bookstore.

Southern Patriot, 3210 West Broadway, Louisville, Ky. 40211. For \$3 a year, you can get monthly coverage of popular struggles occurring throughout the South. Published by the Southern Conference Education Fund (SCEF), the newspaper also regularly includes book reviews, political commentary, and notice of upcoming events.

Broadside TV, 204 East Waukauga Street, Johnson City, Tenn. 37601. Utilizing the concentration of cable TV networks in Appalachia, Broadside has developed a regular series of tapes for TV stations, elementary and secondary schools, and special workshops. Committed to letting the people of Appalachia speak for themselves, the tapes range from portraits of musicians to mountain news. Ask for a free catalog.

American Report, 235 East 49th St., N.Y., N.Y. 10017. "A review of religion and American power," AR began publishing during the anti-war movement as the voice of Clergy and Laymen Concerned About Vietnam. Still providing excellent coverage of international news, particularly southeast Asia, the tabloid has broadened to include news and comment on other war-related and corporate power issues.

